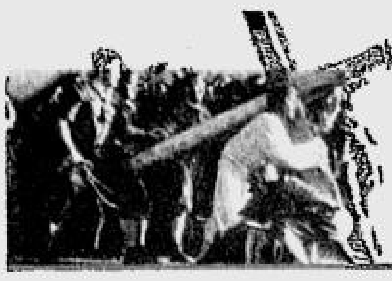
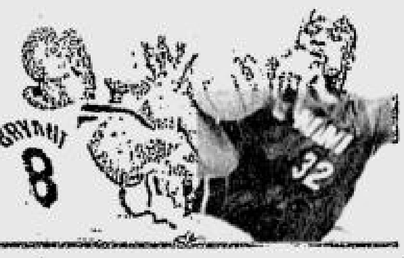


■ Lifestyle / E1
The most notable movies of 2004

■ Entertainment / A36
Jessa: I will never look dumpy

■ Business/ B1
Consumer confidence weakens sharply

■ Sports / A28
Shaq gets what he wants as Heat nip Lakers in OT



## Italian cops create image of Jesus at 12

ITO ANG BATANG HESUS SABI NG COMPUTER!

ROME—Using the same technology that adds wrinkles to the drawings of Mafia bosses to identify them after decades on the lam, the Italian police have shaved years, and a beard, off an image taken

ITALIAN / A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

## Little chance SC will stop Erap's departure today

**By Philip C. Tubeza, Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Christian V. Esguerra**

THE POSSIBILITY of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. stopping former President Joseph Estrada from traveling to Hong Kong is a long shot, the spokesperson of the Supreme Court

LITTLE/ A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Monday, December 27, 2004 ★★★ 68 pages / 6 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 19 P18
website: www.inq7.net

# Tidal waves kill 7,000

## *Earthquake, tsunamis slam 5 Asian countries*

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—The most powerful earthquake in 40 years triggered massive tidal waves that slammed into coastlines across Asia on Sunday, killing more than 7,000 people in Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

Tourists, fishermen, hotels, homes and cars were swept away by walls of water unleashed by the 8.9-magnitude earthquake, centered off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, where at least 1,902 people were killed by floods and collapsing buildings, officials said.

But the scope of the disaster became apparent only after waves as high as six meters (20 feet) crashed into coastal areas throughout the Indian Ocean and Andaman Sea. *(See photos on Page A22.)*

In Sri Lanka—some 1,600 km west of the epicenter—3,000 had been killed, the prime minister's office said. One million more were affected by the surging wall of water, the government said.

Indian officials said as many as 1,900—perhaps many more—had been killed along the southern coast. Another 198 were confirmed dead in Thailand, 42 in Malaysia and two in Bangladesh. Thousands of people were missing, many of them fishermen at sea, and rescue workers struggled against floodwaters to find and evacuate stranded victims.

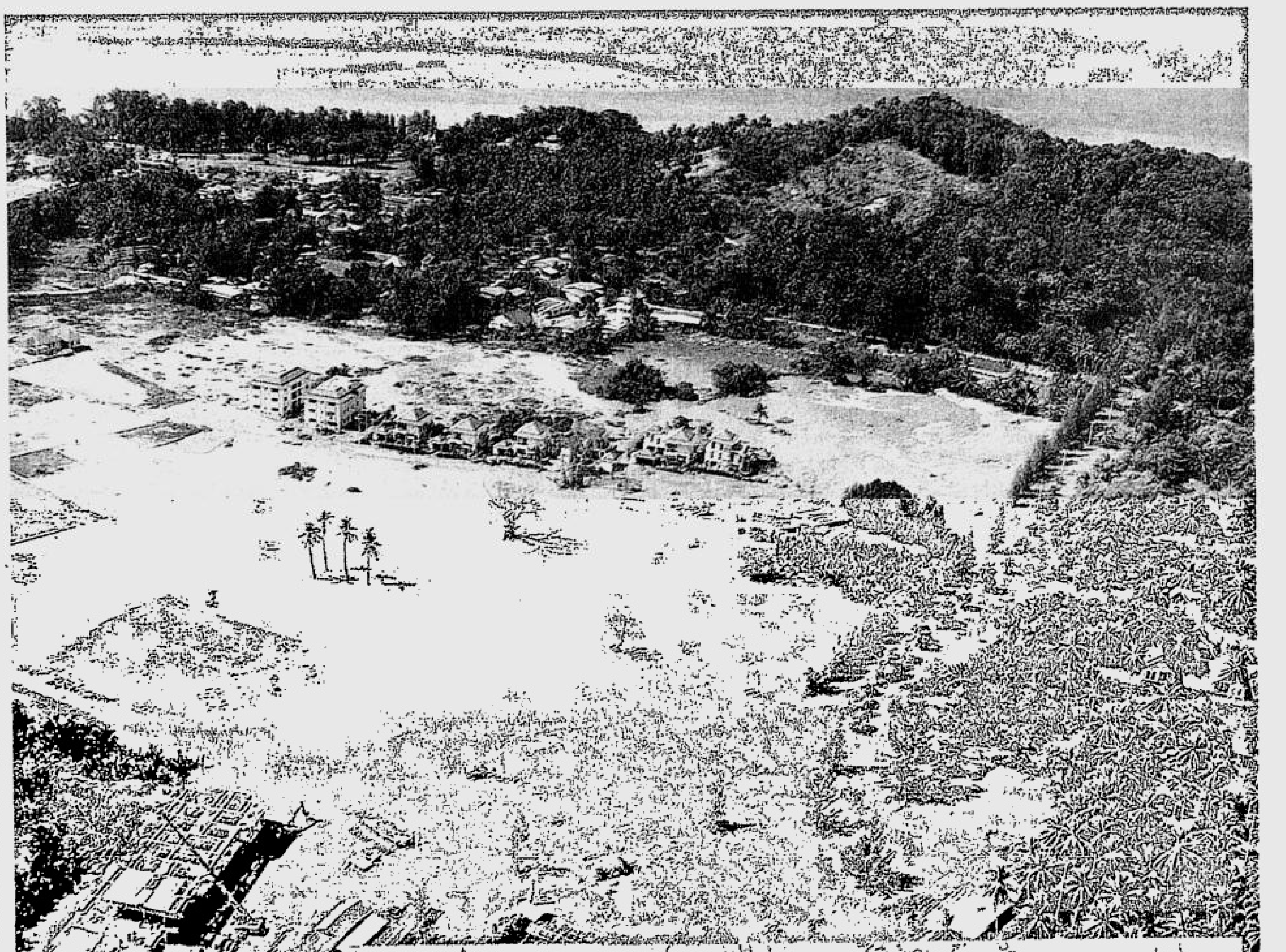
The death toll climbed throughout the day and was expected to grow even higher as more bodies were discovered. Hundreds of bodies were found on various beaches along India's southern state of Tamil Nadu, and more were expected to be washed in by the sea, officials said.

"I was shocked to see innumerable fishing boats flying on the shoulder of the waves, going back and forth into the sea, as if made of paper," said P. Ramanamurthy, 40, a resident of the neighboring Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

"Many boats were upturned, but fishermen were still holding on to them," Ramanamurthy said. "They also were pushed into the sea. It was shocking."

Among those killed along India's Andhra Pradesh state were 32 people, including 15 children, who had gone into

TIDAL WAVES/ A21



**PARADISE LOST:** Aerial view of devastation wrought by a tsunami in the resort island of Phuket, Thailand.

REUTERS

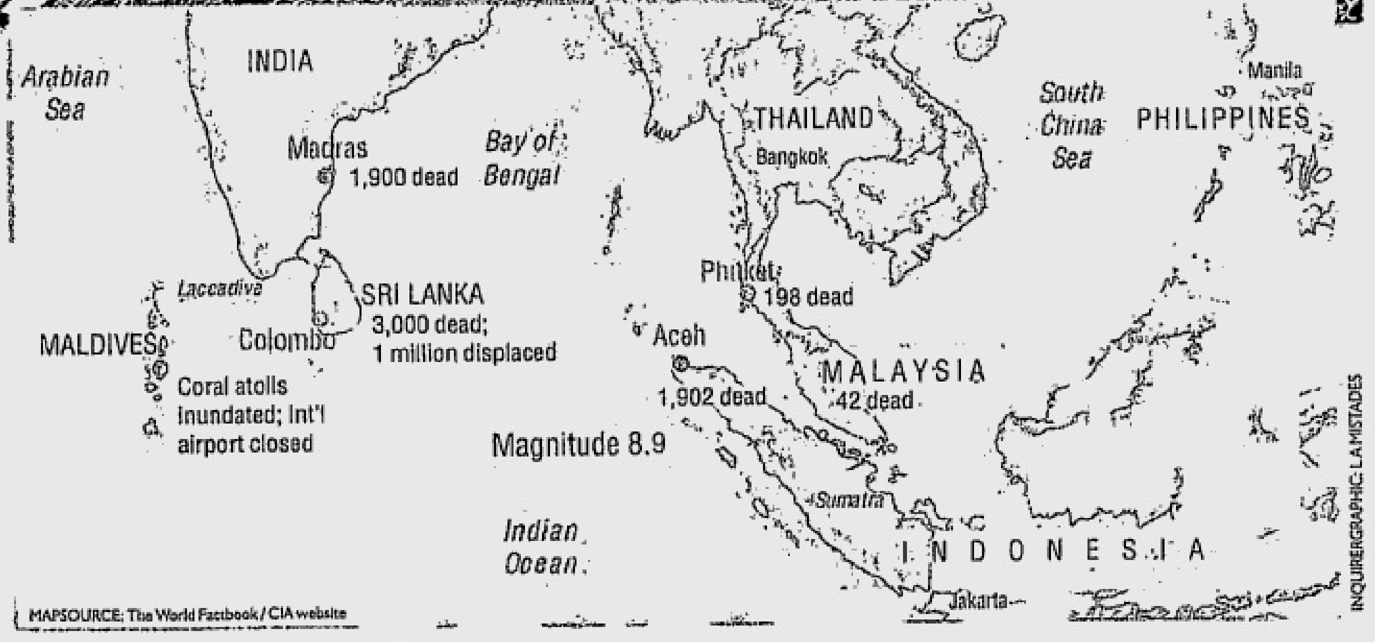
**IN THE KNOW**

### What are tsunamis?

Tsunamis like those that wreaked havoc across Asia on Sunday, leaving thousands dead, are massive waves that are usually caused by earthquakes deep under the ocean floor and can travel vast distances.

Born of strong seismic shocks, tsunamis can reach huge heights and speeds, picking up strength as they cross the ocean—often with disastrous results thousands of kilometers from their origin.

Despite their strength, they can be barely noticeable out at sea. *AFP*



MAPSOURCE: The World Factbook / CIA website

INQUIRERGRAPHIC LAMISTADES

## No hit list of counterrevolutionaries—Sison

JOSE Maria Sison, founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said yesterday the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, were not keeping a hit list of counterrevolutionaries.

Sison was reacting to an open letter by UP professor Walden Bello and Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales asking him whether they and the others, who were identified as counterrevolutionaries in the Dec. 7 issue of the CPP publication Ang Bayan, would be killed one by one.

Bello and Rosales were referring to the diagram of individuals and organizations and their links to Troskyites and social democrats abroad.

"Any honest reader can see for himself or herself that this diagram is nothing more than a presentation of the fragmentation of pseudo-revolutionary petty bourgeois grouplets in the Philippines and their connections mainly with various Trotskyite factions abroad," Sison, who is now based in The Netherlands, said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

Sison, chief political consultant of the

NO HIT LIST/ A21

## Gov't takes bold step in Naia 3 takeover

**By Amando Doronila**

**ANALYSIS**

IN A RARE demonstration of political will, the administration finally got out of a rut and acted decisively to expropriate Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia 3).

To say that the decision was long overdue is the height of banality. It also understates the exasperating reluctance of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo to exercise the powers of the presidency and the state to take bold steps to implement a longstanding decision (expropriation) that is clearly in the public interest and that flows from a Supreme Court decision annulling the corruption-ridden contracts on the terminal.

What is surprising about the move to ask a court to allow Naia 3 to be opened by the middle of 2005 is that the administration has taken too long to act to dis-

GOV'T/ A8

## Quezon folk find lifeline in charcoal

**By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

REAL, Quezon—Although residents here have not completely recovered from the tragedy of losing their loved ones and their homes, they are faced with the harsh reality of earning a living.

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade.

Here, life gave them logs—lots of them scattered along the coastline. So

QUEZON/ A8

## Sunken boats lose legacy of relics

**A DIVER** explores the wreckage of a boat off Palawan.

IVETTE LEE

**By Jofelle P. Tesorio and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

TWO SUNKEN vessels—one in Palawan and another in Quezon, and both of great historical value—are slowly being divested of bits and pieces as well as precious cargo.

In Palawan, a US patrol torpedo (PT) boat that was part of the convoy that accompanied President Manuel Quezon and Gen. Douglas MacArthur on their way to Australia and the United States in 1942, is being sold piece by piece by treasure hunters and some fishermen, according to Jess de la Torre, a local historian.

De la Torre, who is writing a book on the history of Palawan, made the alarming discovery during a recent visit to the Tagawayan Cove in Barangay

SUNKEN/ A21

**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Whole of Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming more frequent rains over Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/27/04

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Partly Cloudy | Iloilo/Bacolod | Cloudy with Rains |
| Baguio | Partly Cloudy | Roxas | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tuguegarao | Partly Cloudy | Cebu | Cloudy with Rains |
| Laoag | Partly Cloudy | Tacloban | Frequent Rains |
| Clark Zone | Partly Cloudy | Gen. Santos | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tagaytay | Partly Cloudy | Zamboanga | Cloudy with Rains |
| Legazpi | Partly Cloudy | Cagayan de Oro | Cloudy with Rains |
| Calapan | Cloudy with Rains | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |

# GMA orders relocation of 1,500 Real families

**Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

REAL, Quezon—President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the preparation of the resettlement of calamity victims in northern Quezon.

During her Christmas Day visit to the devastated village of Tignoan here, she declared that the government was eyeing 15 hectares of private land in Barangay Mapalad as a possible relocation site for at least 1,500 homeless families from Real.

Ms Arroyo said the land was owned by the same family who owns Adamson University. She ordered Quezon Rep. Rafael Nantes to start negotiations with the Adamson family for the planned conversion of their property as a resettlement site for the calamity victims.

"Let us all hope that the owners would allow us to use at least half of their property so that all of you can start building a new house and a new life in the coming New Year," the President told the crowd of displaced families who also lost loved ones in the collapsed Repador building.

EDWIN BACASMAS

**A BOY and his dog watch as President Macapagal-Arroyo's helicopter lands in Barangay Tignoan, Real, Quezon, on Christmas Day.**

Ms Arroyo, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, Nantes, Real local officials and families of the victims of the collapsed Repador building were gathered under a makeshift tent beside the rubble.

Nantes said that aside from the 1,500 housing units that the government planned to construct in Real, another 3,577 units would be erected in Infanta and another 1,700 in General Nakar.

The lawmaker said a "livable" housing unit would cost at least P40,000 each.

"Our thrust now is the relocation of people who live beside riverbanks and in areas prone to flash floods and landslides," Nantes said.

Elmer Billedo, chief geologist pf the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, described the target relocation site in Barangay Mapalad as located "on plains and far away from the mountains."

Soliman said it was the President's idea to spend part of her Christmas Day with the families of the victims of the Repador building collapse. "The President wants to bring Christmas cheer to the calamity victims," she said.

Nantes, who had been coordinating with the National Disaster Coordinating Council, said he had requested P127 million from the national government for the restoration of roads and bridges. Already, P32 million had been allotted to him for initial rehabilitation work.

From the nearby Juliana Resort where the President's helicopter landed, Ms Arroyo and her party walked toward the rubble of the Repador building some 30 meters away. She led the symbolic distribution of relief packs to 200 calamity victims who sported blue-and-white ribbons in one hand identifying them as relief pack recipients.

After the President left the area, throngs of the ribbon-less calamity victims stormed the resort and demanded their share of the relief packs.

Police interceded and prevented what could have been a riot of hungry crowds.

"We're all calamity victims here, not just the victims in Repador," shouted an old woman with a wailing granddaughter in tow.

## AFP admits massive turnout of Poe mourners scared 'em

**By Christian V. Esguerra**

NOW IT can be told.

The Armed Forces yesterday admitted it got "scared" by the massive turnout of people mourning the death of movie star and defeated presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

"What was really critical was Dec. 22, we really feared the burial," Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP information officer, said in Filipino in a radio interview.

The military feared that the crowd might be instigated to storm Malacañang as part of an alleged plot to unseat President Macapagal-Arroyo.

This prompted the military to beef up security in Metro Manila amid talk of a power grab, the military official said.

"We saw on television that the crowd was really huge and we would have had problems if the mourners were used for some other purpose," he said without identifying any group behind the alleged plot.

## LEFT AND RIGHT
## *CBCP called apologists*

**By Norman Bordadora and Blanche Rivera**

LEFTIST militants have called on members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines to stop acting as emissaries of the Arroyo administration in its renewed bid for reconciliation.

Calling them "apologists" of the administration, the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the CBCP should not allow itself to be used in any campaign to downplay rising protests against government policies.

Pamalakaya said the Palace was using the CBCP as an instrument against the opposition and other political forces opposed to President Macapagal-Arroyo's policies it perceived as "anti-people."

"The CBCP is being used by the ringleaders of the [Arroyo administration] to stop, if not tone down, the escalating protest," said Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Albert Corpuz.

Malacañang has assigned CBCP president Fernando Capalla to draft a national reconciliation framework that would allow the Palace to reach out to opposition groups and other perceived longtime adversaries of the government, including former First Lady Imelda Marcos and businessman Eduardo Cojuangco.

Capalla presented the reconciliation plan to President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet on Sept. 21. The Davao-based bishop and Fr. Romeo Intengan, former provincial superior of the Jesuits, are currently holding consultations with people involved in the reconciliation efforts.

Corpuz said 2005 would be a crucial year for Ms Arroyo, warning of more protests to come. "Next year, the chances of ousting this President in the tradition of two successful People Power will be seen," he said.

### *Pamalakaya a Red front?*

BUT JESUIT priest Romeo Intengan, who drafted the national reconciliation framework, said that groups like Pamalakaya who profit from dissension in society, would understandably not like the reconciliation being pursued by the government and the Catholic Church.

"They believe in armed struggle, they're linked with the NPA (New People's Army). For people on that side of the political spectrum, dissension makes it easier to seize power," Intengan told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

"We, the Church people, came forward as a response to the government's call for reconciliation. We saw their appeal had sense. I don't think we're being used, the framework was very balanced," Intengan said.

Intengan explained the framework he drafted followed two principles: being ethically upright and politically viable. It stressed the need for truth-seeking and truth-telling, reparation and restitution before any reconciliation is achieved, he said.

He cited several papers by the Vatican, Caritas, the International Center for Transitional Justice, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and other secular humanist studies as a guide for the framework.

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Ylaya-Tondo

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Araneta Center
Comercio
New Divisoria Market
Sta. Mesa
Tanay

12:00 NN to 6:00 PM
Divisoria Center

DECEMBER 30
Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Concepcion-Malabon
Dart Street-Paco
EDSA-Cubao Aurora
Farmers Plaza
Folgueras
Head Office
Honorio Lopez Blvd.-Balut
Pritil-Tondo
Sta. Mesa
Sto. Cristo-CM Recto
Tutuban

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Ortigas-Robinson's Galleria

12:00 NN to 6:00 PM
Divisoria Center

DECEMBER 31
Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Head Office
Quiapo
Sto. Cristo-San Nicolas

LUZON

DECEMBER 18
Saturday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Agoo
Aparri
Baguio-Bonifacio
Baguio-Magsaysay Blvd.
Baguio-Session
Bangued-Abra
Batac
Benguet-La Trinidad
Calamba Market
Candon
Daet
La Union Main
La Union-ML Quezon
Laoag-Gen. Segundo
Legaspi-Mabini
Lucena, Quezon
Naga Main
Paseo de Sta. Rosa
San Pablo Main
Santiago City Road
Santiago-Maharlika
Solano
Sorsogon
Sta. Cruz-Laguna
Sta. Rosa-Balibago
Tuguegarao-Balzain
Tuguegarao-Luna

DECEMBER 30
Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Alaminos
Apalit, Pampanga
Baguio-Cariño
Baguio-Magsaysay Blvd.
Baguio-Session
Balanga, Bataan
Baliuag-JP Rizal
Baliuag-Trinidad
Cabanatuan Maharlika-North
Cabanatuan Maharlika-South
Cabanatuan Main
Cabanatuan-Paco Roman
Calamba Crossing
Calamba Real
Canlubang-Carmelray
Cauayan
Dagupan-Fernandez
Dagupan-Perez
Dinalupihan, Bataan
Gapan
Guagua
Hagonoy, Bulacan
Iba, Zambales
Ilagan
Laguna Technopark
Laoag Main
Lingayen
Lucena-Red V
Naga-Gen. Luna
Olongapo
Olongapo-Gapan Highway
San Fernando-B. Mendoza
San Fernando-Dolores
San Fernando Main
San Fernando-Sindalan
San Jose, Nueva Ecija
San Miguel, Bulacan
San Pablo-Colago
Subic-Baraca
Subic Bay
Vigan

DECEMBER 31
Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Dagupan Main
Iriga, Camarines Sur
San Carlos, Pangasinan
Tabaco

VISAYAS

DECEMBER 30
Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Antique
Bacolod-Gonzaga
Boracay
Cebu-Opon
Cebu-Tabunok
Iloilo-Delgado
Iloilo-Iznart
Kalibo
Roxas
Roxas-Arnaldo

DECEMBER 31
Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Bacolod-6th Street
Bacolod-Araneta
Bacolod-Capitol
Bacolod-Gatuslao
Bacolod-Libertad
Bacolod-North Drive
Cebu-Downtown Center
Cebu-Taboan
Silay
Tacloban Main

MINDANAO

DECEMBER 31
Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Butuan
Cagayan de Oro-Cogon
Cagayan de Oro Main
Cotabato-Makakua
Davao-Bajada
Davao Center
Davao-Rizal
Davao-Sta. Ana
Davao-Toril
Dipolog-Gen. Luna
Gen. Santos-Pioneer
Iligan-Gen. Aguinaldo
Pagadian-Rizal
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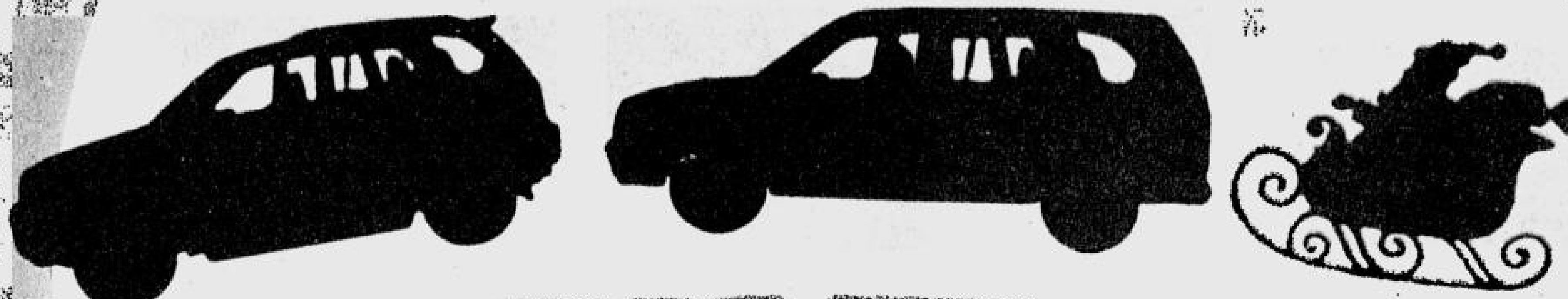

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| SR 1.8 GAS A/T | 896,000 | 100,000 | 67,342 | 46,416 | 36,782 | 26,500 | 21,622 | 18,335 | 17,196 |
| GSX 2.0 GAS A/T | 847,000 | 100,000 | 62,921 | 43,370 | 34,371 | 24,763 | 20,205 | 17,131 | 16,067 |
| GLX 1.8 GAS A/T | 807,000 | 90,000 | 60,215 | 41,505 | 32,895 | 23,699 | 19,337 | 16,395 | 15,376 |
| GL 1.8 GAS M/T | 698,000 | 80,000 | 51,500 | 35,349 | 28,023 | 20,189 | 16,473 | 13,963 | 13,096 |
| DLX 2.4 DSL M/T | 690,000 | 80,000 | 53,242 | 36,698 | 29,063 | 20,938 | 17,084 | 14,496 | 13,596 |
| DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (12.07%) | 663,000 | 80,000 | 48,583 | 33,173 | 26,301 | 18,948 | 15,460 | 13,103 | 12,290 |
| DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (50%) | 663,000 | 331,500 | 27,625 | 18,417 | 13,856 | 9,890 | 8,037 | 6,776 | 6,336 |

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| 4X2 SV M/T | 1,048,000 | 100,000 | 84,626 | 58,331 | 46,401 | 33,266 | 27,142 | 23,041 | 21,610 |

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### 'HIGHEST MINDANAOAN'

# Lanao solon hits plan to sack NIA exec

**By Carlito Pablo**

THE CHAIR of the House committee on social welfare and development yesterday hit the reported plan to relieve Jesus Paras as administrator of the National Irrigation Administration.

Rep. Faysah Dumarpa (Lakas, Lanao del Sur) said that not only was Paras "quite successful" at the NIA since his appointment in May 2001 but, more importantly, he is currently the "highest Mindanaoan in the Arroyo Cabinet."

"It seems the old adage 'out of sight, out of mind' is an appropriate phrase that would describe the current situation of Mindanaoans in the Arroyo administration," she said.

PARAS

Dumarpa was reacting to reports that Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap is about to replace Paras, who hails from Cagayan de Oro, at the NIA.

"Paras is the highest Mindanaoan in the Arroyo Cabinet and we would like to appeal to President Arroyo to keep him in his post," she said.

Dumarpa did not say why Paras is said to be up for relief from his post.

Dumarpa said that she has initiated a resolution to be co-signed by Mindanaoans in the House of Representatives to appeal for Paras' retention at the NIA.

"Among the projects he has practically completed are the P2-billion irrigation project in Malvar, Cotabato, and the Casecnan Irrigation Project in Nueva Vizcaya, which is still ongoing," Dumarpa said.

"We want to be represented in government by an official who is from Mindanao," she added.

Earlier, Dumarpa had recommended the appointment of more Muslim diplomats, particularly for missions in the troubled Middle East.

She said that the appointment of Filipino-Muslim diplomats will ensure tighter bonds between the Philippines and Islamic host countries.

"This will also attract investors from Arab and Muslim countries," she said.

Dumarpa noted that she and others have been fighting for a voice of the Mindanaoans in the government "but it seems this has fallen on deaf ears as another Mindanaoan is about to be relieved of his post."

Former Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong was the highest Mindanaoan in the Cabinet before the elections. He has since reclaimed his seat in the House.

# *Bamboo plays at EK*

BAMBOO, one of OPM's biggest hitmakers, will perform at Enchanted Kingdom tomorrow, Dec. 28. The band, acknowledged as MTV Pilipinas' Best New Artist and Best Group, will perform hit singles from their platinum album "As the Music Plays," including MTV Pilipinas' favorite song, "Noypi," and other hits like "Mr. Clay" and "Masaya."

Bamboo's concert, starting at 8 p.m. at the Space Port Zone, highlights Enchanted Kingdom's holiday events this year. Bamboo is made up of lead vocalist Bamboo Mañalac and instumentalists Nathan Azarcon, Ira Cruz and Vic Mercado.

Since its founding in 1995, Enchanted Kingdom has been popular not only for its rides but also for its well-chosen entertainment lineup.

Enchanted Kingdom, the country's only world-class theme park, regularly stages concerts, dance shows and celebrity storytelling sessions at its seven different park zones. It also features a magnificent fireworks display to end a day of great fun.

A trip to Enchanted Kingdom during the holiday season has become a tradition among many Filipinos. Enchanted Kingdom is located in Sta. Rosa, only 30 minutes away from Manila. Until Jan. 2, 2005, the park is open from 10 a.m. until midnight, with the fireworks display set off at 10 p.m.

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# Pinay jailed in HK for stealing coins from employer

HONG KONG—A Filipina maid working in Hong Kong has been jailed for a month for stealing the equivalent of US$250 in coins from her employer to buy Christmas gifts for her children in the Philippines, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Luz Tamayo Crisostomo, 31, had earlier pleaded guilty to theft and a judge sentenced her on Saturday to a month in jail, the South China Morning Post said. It did not give the maid's hometown.

Crisostomo admitted stealing HK$1,940 (US$250) in coins from a box in her employer's bedroom and wiring the money home.

Her lawyers said she wanted her three children to use the money to buy Christmas gifts, the report said.

Court officials could not immediately be reached for comment on the report.

Tens of thousands of foreigners from developing Asian countries—mainly the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand—work as maids in wealthy Hong Kong for a minimum wage of HK$3,270 (US$420) a month.

*AP*

# Ex-HK socialite, jailbird back to role as fund-raiser

**By Fe Zamora**

BUENO-COADY

SHE WAS a Hong Kong socialite and a celebrated fund-raiser. Everything changed when she was meted a life term for the murder of her lover in March 1999.

A few months ago, Ma. Remedios "Baby" Bueno-Coady was released and she's back home doing what she does best.

Deported to Manila upon her Aug. 21 release from the Tai Lam prison in Hong Kong, Bueno-Coady, after a tearful reunion with her family in Zambales, linked up with friends and associates, reviving her career as a charity fund-raiser.

Already, she has lined up activities for the new year.

"There is so much to do, so many overseas Filipinos to help," said Bueno-Coady, whose life term was commuted to 10 years.

The 49-year-old former model was released for good behavior. She has also maintained her innocence.

For March next year, Bueno-Coady has organized a fashion show featuring top fashion designers from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) countries. She is also reprising a 1996 art/photo exhibit of artists from Apec member-economies.

The fashion show, which will be held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati, features top government officials and their spouses among the models.

Bueno-Coady said part of the proceeds of the fashion show would go to the legal aid fund for OFWs who are in jail, and to help finance President Macapagal-Arroyo's goal to build 10,000 public classrooms nationwide.

"We will also promote tourism here because we will be inviting foreign celebrities to the fashion show," she said.

For April, it's a golf tournament in Brunei.

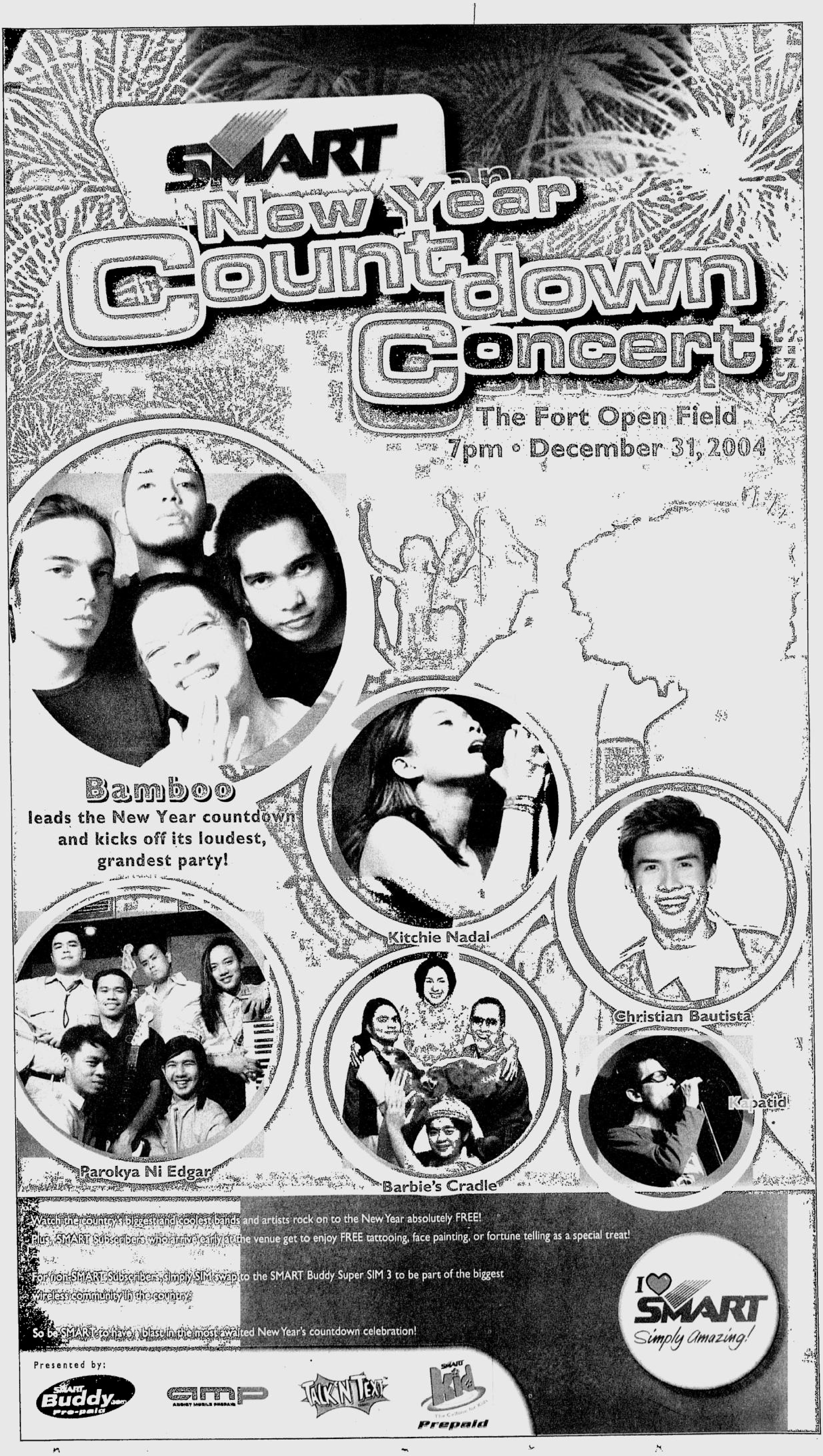
She is organizing the golf tournament in Bandar Seri Begawan for the royal family, reviving her ties with the monarchy that started in 1987 when she became the sole distributor of Van Cleef & Arpels in Brunei.

She has also lined up trips to visit OFWs languishing in jails abroad. As of December, there are more than 3,000 Filipino inmates abroad.

"They are my priority," Bueno-Coady said, adding: "It's going to be a busy year."

Her last four months had been just as busy.

Linking up with the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, she also helped organize medical missions to Mindoro Oriental, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes.



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| BETALOC 50mg tab | Metoprolol | 11.25 | 6.00 | **5.25** |
| BETALOC 100mg tab | Metoprolol | 19.50 | 12.00 | **7.50** |
| **NON-STEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS** | | | | |
| PONSTAN 250mg tab | Mefenamic Acid | 11.50 | 7.41 | **4.09** |
| **ORAL HYPOGLYCEMIC/ ANTI-DIABETES AGENTS** | | | | |
| DAONIL 5mg tab | Glibenclamide | 9.30 | 5.11 | **4.19** |

| IMPORTED MEDICINES* DRUG/DOSAGE | GENERIC NAME | CURRENT MARKET PRICE | PRESYONG BOTIKA NG BAYAN | YOU SAVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ORAL HYPOGLYCEMIC/ ANTI-DIABETES AGENTS** | | | | |
| EUGLUCON 5mg tab | Glibenclamide | ₱ 9.70 | ₱ 5.26 | **₱ 4.44** |
| DIAMICRON 80mg tab | Gliclazide | 12.00 | 11.00 | **1.00** |
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| DILANTIN 100mg cap | Phenytoin | 22.50 | 12.00 | **10.50** |
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**And Botika ng Bayan** – Stall #5, Ascencion Road, **Lagro, Quezon City** and **PITC**, 2nd Floor NDC Building, Tordisillas St., **Makati City**

## *More DSAP Drugstores to be Accredited Soon!*

**REAL TRAGEDY**
April Ann de la Torre and her brother, Ian Kenneth, who both survived the collapse of the Repador building evacuation center, make their way through a field strewn with logs to see President Macapagal-Arroyo during her Christmas Day visit to Barangay Tignoan, Real, Quezon. EDWIN BACASMAS

# Palace plans to cut short Congress' Christmas break

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG is planning to cut short the lawmakers' Christmas break so Congress can resume deliberations on President Macapagal-Arroyo's urgent tax reform package.

"We're not ruling out calling for an early special session after the New Year just to get our tax reforms back on track," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in a phone interview.

Bunye said a special session would allow the Senate to jumpstart deliberations on three bills—the lateral attrition law, the rationalization of fiscal incentives and the abolition of value-added tax exemptions—that were left hanging at the committee level.

Congress went into recess on Dec. 18 with only one bill approved—the increase in excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol products—out of the eight revenue measures that President Arroyo wanted passed before the end of this year.

This is a big let-down for President Arroyo who, just a few months ago, boasted that she had obtained the assurance of her congressional allies—who dominate the Senate and House of Representatives—that at least four of her eight tax bills would be approved by Jan. 1.

Malacañang had considered calling an extended session this week but it scuttled the plan to give House Speaker Jose de Venecia time to recuperate from the pain of losing his youngest daughter who died recently in a fire.

The new taxes are meant to shore up government revenues to solve the chronic budget deficit and avert a downgrade after credit rating agencies raised doubts on the President's seriousness in solving the fiscal problems.

Aside from the tax package, Bunye said the early special session would allow Congress to resume deliberations on the national budget. Both Malacañang and Congress are aiming to have the budget approved by February next year and avoid having a reenacted budget for the second straight year.

# We're stable, AFP loan association assures public

By Carlito Pablo

THE 32,000-STRONG Air Materiel Wing Savings and Loan Association Inc. is financially stable contrary to claims that its funds are being dissipated.

This assurance was made by AMWSLAI president Chief Supt. Luvin Manay in response to a recent privilege speech delivered by Rep. Jose Solis (Kampi, Sorsogon) who raised allegations of irregularities by members of the loan association's board of directors.

"Be assured that AMWSLAI is stable and will remain stable under the stewardship of the incumbent board," Manay said in a statement.

The operations of private loan associations like AMWSLAI and other military and police-related groups have come under scrutiny in light of graft and corruption cases hounding former and current ranking officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Solis, a former military officer, claimed in his speech that members of the association's board of directors had awarded themselves a total of P77 million in advanced gratuity pay under dubious circumstances.

Solis also raised other issues like uncollected loans amounting to at least P2 billion and other alleged fraudulent acts resulting to the supposed depletion of the AMWSLAI funds.

Manay, however, said that the "financial stability of the association is borne by records which had passed the triple redundancy audit."

"Meaning, firstly, these (records) are audited by the internal auditor; secondly, by the external auditor, the prestigious Punongbayan & Araullo Associates, and thirdly, by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas," Manay said.

## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 27, 2004
John, Apostle and Evangelist
1st Reading: 1 Jn 1:1-4
Gospel: Jn 20:2-8

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala ran to Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved. And she said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have laid him."

Peter then set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down and saw the linen cloths lying flat, but he did not enter.

Then Simon Peter came following him and entered the tomb; he, too, saw the linen cloths lying flat. The napkin, which had been around his head was not lying flat like the other linen cloths but lay rolled up in its place. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and believed.

**Commentary**

*In art St. John is represented by an eagle, because (as St. Augustine said) no one soared so near heaven as he did. Still, he had his feet on the ground too. It was he who showed us, rather than the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper and saying (equivalently), "Do this in memory of me." The most down-to-earth service of one another, it seems, is like another Eucharist—certainly a communion. As Eckhart put it, "Heaven can only work in the ground of the earth."*

*He became a disciple first of John the Baptist and then of Jesus, who called him to be an apostle and nicknamed him and his brother James "Boanerges," "sons of thunder" (Mk 3:17). John, together with James and Peter, made up the inner group of disciples who were with Jesus on the heights and in the depths: they witnessed his Transfiguration and were present in Gethsemane. Next to Peter, John was the most active of the apostles in organizing the early Church in Palestine and, later, throughout Asia Minor. According to tradition, during a period of persecution of Christians by the Romans, John was banished to Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Later he is said to have gone to Ephesus, where he wrote three Epistles and the fourth Gospel.*

*The prologue to that gospel begins with the language of sublimity, but soon we hear the heart-swelling words, "The Word was made flesh and lived among us, and we saw his glory…"*

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# Quezon folk find lifeline in charcoal

From page A1

the people of northern Luzon have decided to make charcoal.

The logs that destroyed lives and homes have been transformed into an income-generating product that is now helping them survive.

Nora Doce, a resident of Barangay Capalong in this coastal town, admitted that at the beginning, they knew nothing about charcoal making.

But with so many logs on the shore, they had no choice but to learn the trade to survive.

"My husband is a fisherman. But he can no longer fish because his boat was destroyed by the avalanche of mud and logs from the mountain," Doce said while tending two charcoal pits they've dug in the beach fronting the Pacific Ocean.

Logs of all kinds and sizes litter the coastline of Real, Infanta and General Nakar.

## Out of pity

Along the Real-Infanta road, smoke from several charcoal pits greet passing motorists particularly in places where landslides had occurred.

On the roadside, people sell charcoal priced at between P60 to P75 a sack. Out of pity, motorists would stop and buy charcoal.

"We need more than pity; we need commercial interest in the product," Doce said.

"We make money from charcoal. It helps us survive. It buys us food even if it's just a single meal a day," she said.

Doce related that their house had been swept away by mudslides from a nearby hill.

"It's good we were able to evacuate early or else my whole family would have perished," she said.

Dolce added that the calamity victims should not depend on relief goods for survival.

"Soon, all those relief workers would leave us. We have to accept that. We have to be ready for that. Besides, the distribution of relief packs is no longer fair. It now depends on the *palakasan* (favoritism) system," she lamented.

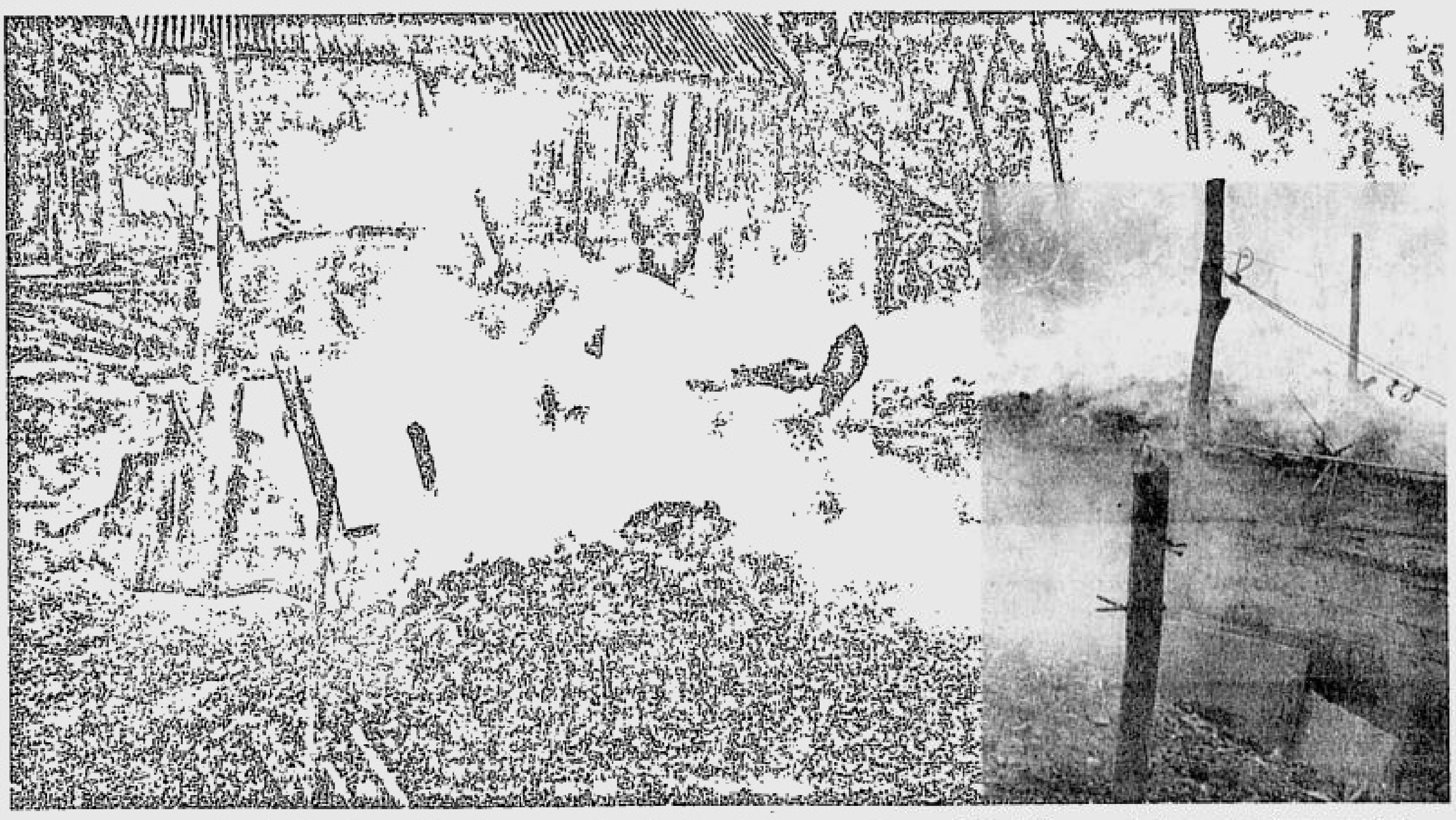
Wilfredo Velacruz, a charcoal maker from the same village, said his fellow villagers were looking for regular buyers. "Maybe those in the *lechon* (roasted pig) business would be interested. We're selling quality charcoal," he said.

Velacruz said charcoal making needed constant monitoring to avoid "half-cooked" products. He added that a "well-cooked" charcoal should remain burning in the pit for at least three days.

"We have to make sure that the soil cover on top of the pit would not fall on the embers and put out the fire," he said.

Velacruz also hopes it doesn't rain.

"Our charcoal pits are open. Once it rains, we'll have to start from scratch," he said.



**A BOY** earns money by cooking charcoal from logs swept into his village in Barangay Tignoan in Real, Quezon, by the spate of typhoons last month.

EDWIN BACASMAS

# Little chance SC will stop Erap's departure today

From page A1

said yesterday.

Reacting to an earlier remark of an Estrada ally that a 24-hour temporary restraining order was to be issued by Davide and affirmed tomorrow by the tribunal in full session, lawyer Ismael Khan Jr. said: "That possibility is rather remote. The Supreme Court is on its decision-writing break."

Khan, chief of the tribunal's public information office, also said that while the Chief Justice had the authority to issue a 24-hour TRO, the latter had not ordered a special session for tomorrow.

"There is no such plan [for a special session]. Otherwise, I would have known it," Khan said.

He said the tribunal was scheduled to resume sessions on Jan. 11.

Estrada, on trial for the nonbailable offense of plunder, was to leave yesterday for knee surgery at the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital. But he could not get an airline booking.

The Sandiganbayan had allowed him to stay in Hong Kong until Jan. 15.

"We wish him well on his trip, which we believe will go on as scheduled [today]," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday in a phone interview.

Bunye also doused concerns that Estrada might use his overseas trip to escape plunder charges.

Those scheduled to go with Estrada on his first trip overseas since his detention are his wife, Sen. Luisa Ejercito-Estrada, his spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen, his doctor Larry Hocson, and four policemen assigned to ensure his return.

Led by Chief Insp. Nicolas Perez, the four policemen have received strict instructions not to let the ousted President "out of sight," said Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police.

## 5 conditions

Bunye said Estrada had complied with all the requirements for the trip.

He cited Estrada's Dec. 20 visa application submitted to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Immigration Department, a copy of which Malacañang released last week in the course of allaying apprehensions that the trip was part of a *quid pro quo* with the government.

In his letter-application, Estrada listed five conditions to get approval for his visa request:

- Keeping a low profile during his stay in Hong Kong.
- Abiding by its laws, including no carrying of firearms.
- Returning to the Philippines as soon as the medical treatment is completed or upon the expiry of his allowed stay.
- Promising not to seek political asylum or refugee status, or pursuing other actions aimed at securing long-term stay in Hong Kong or elsewhere.
- Agreeing that any extension of his stay would be at the discretion of the Hong Kong government's Immigration Department.

## Chavit Singson

Bunye said that after the details of Estrada's trip were made public, even Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson had come to terms with the Sandiganbayan decision allowing the ex-President to seek medical treatment in Hong Kong.

"I believe he (Singson) has understood the Estrada situation. The documents speak for themselves, and what he feared is not about to take place," Bunye said.

Singson had earlier threatened to sever his alliance with President Macapagal-Arroyo over the special treatment of Estrada, including her alleged endorsement of the medical leave to the antigraft court.

"There is no political deal. It was an independent Sandiganbayan decision," Bunye said in a statement, adding:

"If there had been a deal, the former President would not have attacked President Arroyo the way he did during the necrological rites for FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.)."

Bunye was referring to Estrada's remarks at Poe's wake, wherein he claimed that after grabbing control of Malacañang, Ms Arroyo cheated his best friend of victory in the May presidential election.

## Strictly professional

Estrada's four police escorts are all members of the Police Security and Protection Office. The government will shoulder their airfare and expenses during the trip.

"Their job is to ensure that the former President won't escape, and that he'll be back safely in the country on the day he's supposed to return," Bataoil yesterday told the INQUIRER.

He said Chief Inspector Perez and company should ensure that Estrada would not flee and seek refuge in China, with which the Philippines has no extradition treaty.

PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay was so determined not to extend special treatment to Estrada that he ordered the four PSPO officers to maintain a strictly professional relationship with the deposed leader, Bataoil said.

"They're not supposed to accept gifts or favors from him throughout their stay in Hong Kong. Doing so will compromise their duty," Bataoil said.

"We have a standard procedure in the performance of our duty," he added, referring to PNP rules on dealing with detainees, including high-profile subjects like Estrada.

The PNP is wary that the ex-President with a habit of gift-giving may endear himself to his police escorts and keep them from performing their job.

Early this year, the PNP came under fire for allowing Estrada, then detained at the Armed Forces' Camp Capinpin, to occasionally stay at his nearby vacation house in Tanay, Rizal.

The Sandiganbayan eventually allowed Estrada to stay at the sprawling estate, but under heavy security.

## Abuse of discretion

The Office of the Ombudsman had earlier asked the Supreme Court to stop Estrada's trip.

It claimed that the Sandiganbayan abused its discretion in allowing Estrada to make the trip, and raised the possibility that he might not return.

It warned that once Estrada leaves, he would no longer be under the court's jurisdiction and it might not able to enforce any ruling against him.

The Ombudsman also said Estrada could have his knee treated here.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the ex-President's eldest son and his co-accused in the plunder trial, had earlier said that the Supreme Court's issuance of a 24-hour TRO was a possibility.

He had warned that the justices would be "courting the wrath of the masses" if the TRO is issued.

# *Italian cops create image of Jesus at 12*

From page A1

from the Shroud of Turin to create what newspapers here this week hailed as the very visage of a young Jesus.

"Here it is, the real face of the baby Jesus," declared the front page of the newspaper Il Giornale. Italy's largest newspaper, Corriere della Sera, ran a more cautious headline, "Here Is Jesus at Age 12 (According to a Computer)."

## Dirty blond hair

The image shows a 12-year-old boy with fair, smooth skin, glassy blue eyes, fleshy lips and waves of dirty blond hair streaked with just enough purple and pink to suggest a sprinkling of cosmic dust.

The scientific unit of Rome's police force created the image at the behest of reporters of another investigative report about Jesus to be televised the night after Christmas. For that program, the police took photographs from the Shroud of Turin and subtracted about 20 years of aging.

"It came to us an illumination, maybe it was inspiration, What was his face like?" said Elena Guarnieri, the host of the news special. "If that is the face on the shroud, then this is the face of Jesus as a child."

## Serious doubts

Millions of Christians believe that the Shroud of Turin, a linen cloth imprinted with the image of a man's face and wounded body, is the burial shroud of Jesus. But after using carbon-14 dating tests in 1988, a group of scientists dated the cloth between 1260 and 1390, and ruled that it was probably a medieval forgery.

Paul Damon, a geoscientist who was a member of the 1988 testing team at the University of Arizona in Tucson, had serious reservations about the methods the police used.

"I think that it's malarkey," he said.

The Vatican refused to comment about the face of the 12-year-old Jesus, but Damon expressed bewilderment. "The boy would not be blond," he said.

Guarnieri acknowledged that the fair complexion was a bit fanciful, but said the features counted most.

"It's very difficult, because it happened many years ago—we're not magicians," Guarnieri said. "But I am a journalist, and this is based on truth. It's a discovery." *New York Times News Service*

# Gov't takes bold step in Naia 3 takeover

From page A1

mantle all the obstructions set up by Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco) that prevented the opening of the facility to international aviation traffic.

## Welcome change

The expropriation decision comes as a deep relief and welcome change because it signals that the administration has now stopped squandering state powers.

As early as Nov. 29, 2002, when the President announced that she would not honor contracts which are void, she declared she would "invoke the full powers of the presidency under the Constitution to open a safe, secure and smooth-functioning airport."

She made the speech after the Supreme Court had annulled the contracts awarded to the Piatco consortium to build and operate a new international airport terminal after finding that the contracts were tainted with irregularities and disadvantageous to the public.

The same finding of corruption and irregularity was made by the Senate blue ribbon committee inquiry into the transaction.

The administration's decision to get a ruling from the Supreme Court nullifying the contract was a correct one. It won the case. The annulment of the contract was a litmus test of its determination to stamp out corruption in government.

In spite of the vindication of the administration's decision to annul the contracts, it requires explanation why it has taken more than two years to use state powers to take over the passenger terminal.

Piatco has been holding the country hostage by successfully blocking efforts to have the terminal opened.

## Soft state

Now that the administration has exercised the power of the state of eminent domain, it has dispelled some doubts over its political will. For this singular act alone, there is reason to believe that the Philippine state is not at all a "soft state" or a "failed state."

While the administration, which won a new mandate in May, has many faults and is not the best available option during last election, citizens should feel reassured by a rare assertion of strong leadership that can prevail over narrow private interests.

The expropriation of the terminal caught many by surprise, including Piatco, those who had criticized the annulment of the contract and those who didn't expect the government to act boldly. But what's most surprising was the decisiveness of the action taken by an administration notorious for hedging its bets.

Out of the blue, the government announced on Tuesday that the Solicitor General had filed an expropriation case with the Pasay City Regional Trial Court on behalf of the Manila International Airport Authority.

Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said the move was intended to break the impasse in the two-year negotiations between the government and the Piatco consortium, which includes the German firm Fraport AG. The firm operates the Frankfurt international airport.

The impasse developed over claims by Piatco, which is seeking more than $500 million and by Fraport, which wants $425 million in compensation for building the terminal.

## Counterclaim

The government has found these claims exorbitant and "unreasonable." It has offered Piatco $350 million for the terminal.

Fraport has filed an arbitration case with the World Bank's International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes in Washington, while Piatco has filed a recovery case with the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Singapore.

On the other hand, the Philippines has made a counterclaim of $900 million in the ICC.

After two years of deadlock, the government realized that the arbitration process could last until 2006 or 2007, prompting it to take the case out of the hands of external arbiters and to assert the state's right of eminent domain.

Purisima said: "The government has been trying very hard to arrive at a commercial resolution of the situation but despite all efforts it failed and therefore, it is left with no choice but to expropriate so that it can immediately prepare the terminal for operation for the benefit of the people."

## Writ of possession

Things moved swiftly after the government broke the standoff. This time, the courts didn't block the expropriation. The Pasay City Regional Trial Court swiftly issued a writ of possession, allowing the government to take physical control of the terminal.

The court took "judicial notice" that the Supreme Court had nullified the contracts with Piatco on the grounds that they were disadvantageous to the government. This time, the courts aligned themselves with the government's point of view on an issue involving wider public interests with economic repercussions.

The trial court held: "This court entertains no doubt that (Naia 3) is a structure for a well-defined public purpose. Air transport is important to the Philippine economy."

The Manila International Airport Authority will inspect Naia 3 on Dec. 28 to determine the repairs needed to get it ready for opening in six months.

In resorting to expropriation, the government recognized the right of both Piatco and Fraport to receive "just compensation"—which will be decided by subsequent negotiations.

The compensation will be decided by a commission to be appointed by a Philippine court.

This will involve difficult issues. The issue of the right of the state to eminent domain is central to this case, but what's most important is that the administration is demonstrating that its pitch for a "strong republic" is not an idle boast. It is showing that the Philippine state cannot continue to be the flogging beast of private interests and that the weapons of the state to promote public interest are not wasted in government's hands.

(The issues of the terminal's expropriation and their implications will be examined in subsequent articles.)

# Ukraine votes in third presidential showdown

**KIEV, Ukraine—Rival candidates Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovych faced off Sunday in a repeat election triggered by a fraudulent runoff vote and massive protests that resulted in an unprecedented third round in Ukraine's fiercely waged presidential contest.**

The vote is momentous for Ukraine, a nation of 48 million caught between an eastward-expanding European Union and NATO, and an increasingly assertive Russia, its former imperial and Soviet-era master.

Opposition candidate Yushchenko, a former Central Bank chief and prime minister, wants to bring Ukraine closer to the West, while the Kremlin-backed Yanukovych, the current prime minister, emphasizes tightening the Slavic country's ties with Russia as a means to maintain stability.

Oresta Stepanchuk, a university lecturer in Kiev, said she'd cast her ballot for Yushchenko "because he offers us some prospects, some decent life." Another voter at the same precinct, Mykola Vladimirov, said he supported Yanukovych because "the others will sell the country to Americans."

"At least we now have a chance to live as independent people, but with him (Yushchenko) we will be no more than American slaves," he said.

Yushchenko, whose face remains badly scarred from a dioxin poisoning he blamed on Ukrainian authorities, has emerged as the front-runner, building on the momentum of the round-the-clock protests that echoed the spirit of the anti-Communist revolutions that swept other East European countries in 1989-90.

His backers launched the demonstrations after Yanukovych was named the winner of the fraudulent Nov. 21 presidential runoff. The Supreme Court later annulled the results and ordered Sunday's repeat vote—an unprecedented third round being monitored by a 12,000-strong international observer mission.

As the polls opened at 8 a.m., pungent wood smoke from cooking fires cast a gray pall over one end of Kiev's stately main avenue, the Kreshchatyk, where Yushchenko supporters have camped out in a tent city for the five weeks since the second round.

**UKRAINIAN** opposition leaders Viktor Yushchenko (right) and Yulia Timoshenko during a rally in Kiev Dec. 22. AFP

In a nearby sidestreet dotted with fancy boutiques, two men with a wheelbarrow filled plastic jugs with water for the camp from an anachronistic set of public water pumps.

The election crisis has opened a rift between the Russian-speaking eastern regions, which largely back Yanukovych, and the cosmopolitan capital Kiev and the west, where Ukrainian nationalism runs deep and support for Yushchenko is high. *AP*

## *Measures to prevent repeat of poll fraud*

KIEV—Ukraine's rerun presidential vote on Sunday was set after the Supreme Court found that a Nov. 21 poll, which official results handed to the ruling party candidate, was riddled with fraud.

Below is a list of measures enacted since then to prevent the same thing from occurring during the repeat of the runoff on Sunday.

**Election Observers:** A record 12,187 observers have been registered by the central election commission to monitor the poll, compared with 5,000 for the previous ballot.

**Central Election Commission:** The central election commission overseeing the rerun has four new members and does not include the representative from Donetsk, where some of the worst irregularities occurred.

The new commission chief, Yaroslav Davydovich, was one of the two members who refused to sign the results of the November vote.

**Regional Election Commissions:** Ukraine's 225 regional election commissions now have equal representation from each of the two candidates. Each commission's chief and secretary must represent different candidates, and commission members need not be residents of the region.

During the November vote, the election commissions were the same as those during a first-round election on Oct. 31 when each of 24 candidates had a right to representation.

**Voter Lists:** The voter lists for Sunday's election are the same ones used for the first round on Oct. 31. The voting lists used for the Nov. 21 election were significantly longer than those from the first round, increasing by 330,000 voters in the day before the poll.

Voters can now be added to voter lists on election day only with court authorization.

**Absentee Ballots:** The number of absentee ballots is limited to 0.5 percent of registered voters, instead of the four percent allowed previously.

The issuance of an absentee ballot must be approved by two members of the local election commission, one from each candidate.

Voters eligible for absentee ballots get a stamp in their passport that must be checked at the time of voting.

Local polling stations make a list of all those who have received absentee ballots by 8 p.m. on Friday preceding the election and void any unissued absentee ballots. *AFP*

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# Fear of war binds India, Pakistan in new talks

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan—The artillery has fallen silent along the battle-scarred Line of Control dividing Kashmir. Infiltration by Islamic militants has dwindled, and the official rhetoric between Islamabad and New Delhi has mellowed from the bitter exchanges of old.

Since starting peace talks a year ago, tensions have eased markedly between Pakistan and India, and this week they begin formal negotiations on the thorny issue of Kashmir. Hopes of a resolution appear slim, but the nuclear neighbors share one goal that will likely sustain the dialogue—neither side wants war.

"Both sides see the need to keep the peace process going," said analyst Talat Masood, a former senior Pakistani military official.

"To a large extent it's become irreversible as the consequences of a breakdown are unacceptable, not just to the two countries, but to the international community."

Top Foreign Ministry bureaucrats from India and Pakistan are due to begin a two-day meeting in Islamabad on Monday to review progress in talks that began in February after the two countries declared a cease-fire in November 2003 in the disputed Himalayan enclave.

In two rounds of negotiations, senior officials have discussed everything from border disputes and economic cooperation, to countering narcotics trafficking and preventing nuclear war.

While the South Asian rivals have made little substantive progress and mutual suspicions remain, relations have transformed since their militaries faced off in Kashmir in 2002, nearly triggering their fourth war.

India recently reduced its troop numbers in Kashmir, while Pakistan, a key US ally in the war on terrorism, has turned its attention to fighting Islamic militants along the Afghan border, rather than helping them cross the Line of Control to battle Indian security forces.

Leaders of the two countries—enemies since the partition of the subcontinent by former colonial power Britain in 1947—have met on several occasions, and managed to maintain the momentum for peace despite a change of government following May's election in India. The prime ministers are due to meet again on the sidelines of a South Asian summit in Bangladesh next month.

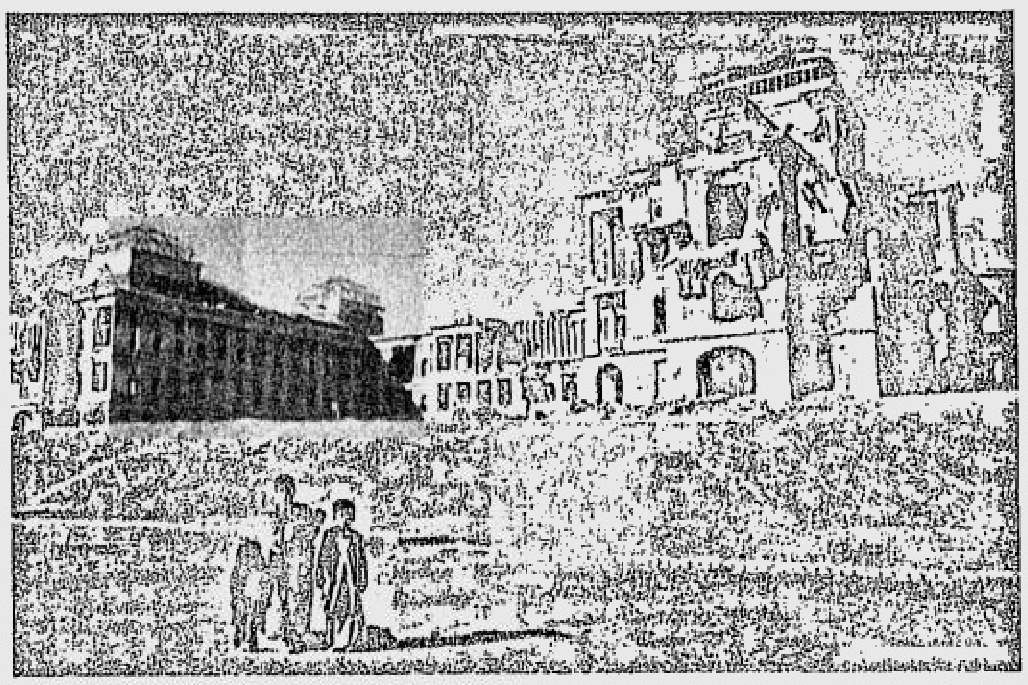
Meanwhile, travel restrictions have eased. Citizens, if they can endure the bureaucratic hurdles, are able to reunite with relatives across the border. Religious pilgrims, artists and athletes have exchanged visits, further demonstrating the wider public's desire for peace.

However, the two governments remain poles apart on Kashmir, and analysts in both countries see little prospect of a breakthrough in this week's dialogue.

Yet complete failure in the peace process isn't in the cards either.

"I don't see the possibility of a move forward in talks on Kashmir," said Khalid Mahmood, a research analyst at Islamabad's Institute of Regional Studies. "But that won't necessarily result in a breakdown in the talks. Both sides have high stakes in seeing the process continue."

Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf is urging both countries to move beyond their uncompromising stated positions on Kashmir. Both claim the divided region in its entirety, and India rejects Pakistan's decades-old call for a referendum of Kashmiris to determine its future. *AP*



AFGHAN children pose for pictures in front of the badly-damaged King's palace in western Kabul, Dec. 26. The palace was destroyed in the bitter struggles which took place between Mujahedin fighters in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. AFP

# *World still reels from Islamic extremism sparked by Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979*

**By Rachel Morarjee**

KABUL—A quarter century after Russia invaded Afghanistan, the world is still feeling the shockwaves from the rise of Islamic extremism sparked by the conflict.

Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan on Dec. 27, 1979, storming the presidential palace, assassinating president Hafizullah Amin, and taking control of the capital in a bid to prop up its failing influence in the region.

The invasion marked the beginning of a decade-long war against the Soviets which resulted in the deaths of 1.3 million Afghans, 15,000 Russian soldiers and forced more than five million Afghans to flee into exile, leaving deserted villages and crumbling irrigation ducts in their wake.

"When they invaded us, people took up arms, they didn't have anything. They had pitchforks and it gave them a real sense of resistance against infidels," said Hamidullah Tarzi, a government minister under the Russians and an advisor to the extremist Islamic Taliban regime that later seized power.

The bitter battle between ill-equipped Afghan resistance fighters who were pitched against the helicopter gunfighters, MIG jetfighters and tanks of one of the world's then superpowers galvanized Islamic feeling across the globe.

The "jihad" or holy war against the Soviet invaders attracted Muslim fighters, including a young Osama bin Laden, giving them frontline experience in guerrilla warfare.

Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network would later go on to carry out the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, killing nearly 3,000 people.

"People from all over the world—Sudan, Chechnya, Algeria and other Arab and Muslim countries—joined the Afghan jihad to defend a Muslim country from becoming a communist state," said General Kamal Matinuddin, a former Pakistani ambassador who is also author of the book The Taliban Phenomenon.

The Soviet army withdrew in a humiliating defeat in 1989, driven back by the guerrillas whom the US armed and financed, using Pakistan's secret services as an intermediary.

The struggles against the Russians fueled the militant ideology of the Islamists, said Afghan defense ministry spokesperson Mohammed Zahir Azimi who himself became a *mujahedin* ("holy warrior") to fight the Russians.

"People did not think that the Russians would leave Afghanistan that soon.

"That is why the ideology needed to be that strong, and then they went back to their countries with the same ideology and with the confidence that they could defeat any army," he told AFP.

In the vacuum that followed the Soviet withdrawal, a vicious civil war erupted between different mujahedin factions backed by Iran, Uzbekistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, but the US turned its back on the central Asian state.

Kabul, which had escaped the Russian invasion relatively unscathed, was bombed and shelled to rubble, killing an estimated 50,000 people and driving a further million abroad in the ensuing conflict.

By the time the hardline Islamic Taliban movement captured the capital in September 1996, the modern city that had grown through the 1980s had been devastated, but that did not end the destruction and warfare in the north.

Five years later, just weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks on the US, Washington launched an air campaign to back Northern Alliance mujahedin fighters on the ground to sweep the Taliban from power, blaming them for harboring bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda lieutenants.

Although Afghanistan took a major step toward the international community when it elected President Hamid Karzai in its first presidential election on Oct. 9, the legacy of nearly a quarter century of conflict has left the country in ruins.

With irrigation systems lying in ruins after decades of war and six years of drought, many are barely scraping a living and more than two million farmers have turned to growing opium for heroin production, an illicit trade equivalent to more than 60 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The 18,000 soldiers of the US-led coalition in Afghanistan have focused their attention on battling remnants of the Taliban in the south and southeast, where reconstruction has stalled due to continuing violence.

In the north and west, security has improved but much remains to be done.

"The conflict in Afghanistan can end if the Americans take positive steps toward its economic development and people in the country get jobs, medicines and basic necessities," said Matinuddin. *AFP*

# S. America drug barons target HK

HONG KONG—Police in Hong Kong believe a massive increase in cocaine seizures this year shows South American drug barons are targeting the city as a growth market, a press report said Sunday.

Seizures of the drug in 2004 jumped almost tenfold to 60 kilograms from 6.6 kilograms in 2003.

Police said the shift in focus toward the region has been prompted by market saturation in Europe and the US, as well as the boom in Southeast Asian economies, reported the South China Morning Post.

Narcotic Bureau chief superintendent Kenny Ip warned that there is a growth in supply in the city as the street value of the drug has almost halved this year.

"Demand for cocaine in Europe and North America has become saturated. So drug dealers have started to expand their markets to Southeast Asia, which is enjoying an economic boom," Ip was quoted as saying. *AFP*

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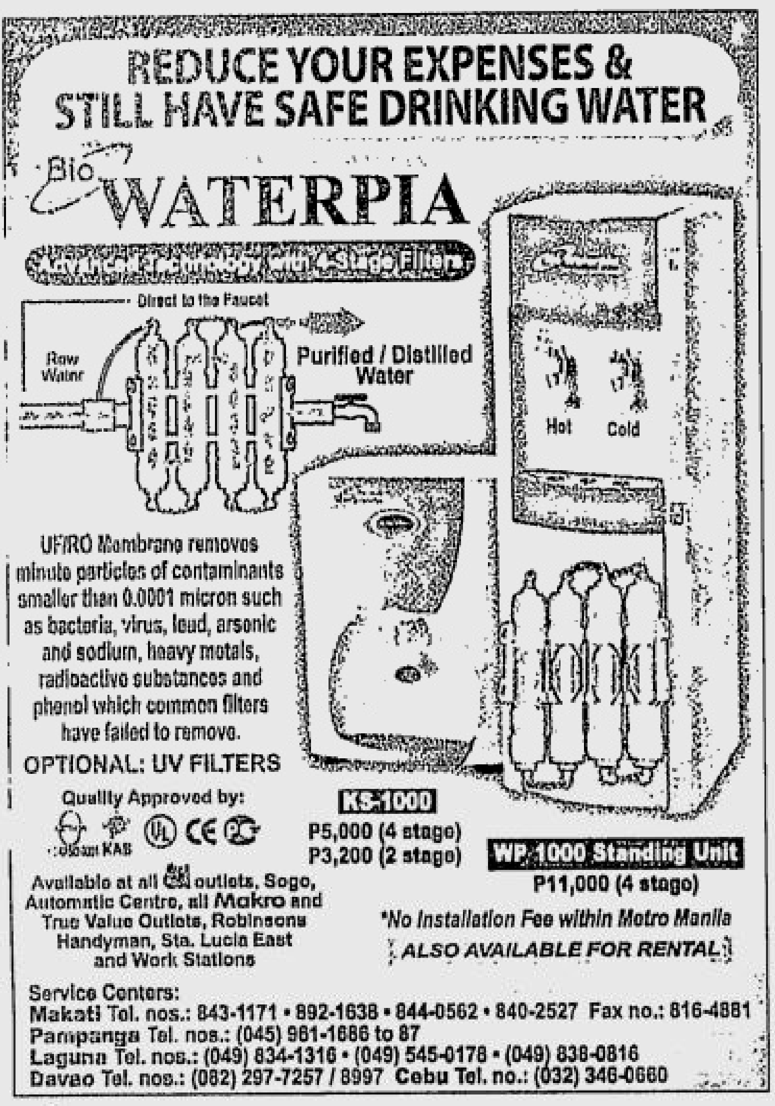

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# US offers guaranteed Sunni role in Iraq, says NYT

WASHINGTON—The US administration is talking to Iraqi leaders about guaranteeing Sunni Arabs a certain number of high-level jobs in the future Iraqi government regardless of the outcome of the Jan. 30 election, The New York Times reported on its website late Saturday.

Citing an unnamed Western diplomat, the newspaper said US officials had already raised with an aide to Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's top Shiite cleric, the possibility of adding some of the top vote-getters among the Sunni candidates to the 275-member legislature, even if they lose to non-Sunni candidates.

The diplomat said that even some Shiite politicians—followers of Ayatollah Sistani—were concerned that a victory by Shiites, effectively shutting Sunni Arabs out of power, could alienate Sunnis and lead to more internal strife, The Times said.

Shiites make up about 60 percent of the population of Iraq and were generally denied power under Saddam Hussein. But they are expected to do well in the upcoming election.

The paper said the idea of adding Sunnis to the legislature after the election was acknowledged by officials as likely to be difficult to carry out, but they said it might be necessary to avoid Sunni estrangement.

Much of the current violence is taking place in Sunni-dominated areas in the central part of the country, and some Sunni leaders have called for a boycott of the election.

"There's some flexibility in approaching this problem," The Times quotes an unnamed administration official as saying. "There's a willingness to play with the end result—not changing the numbers, but maybe guaranteeing that a certain number of seats go to Sunni areas even if their candidates did not receive a certain percentage of the vote."

But the report said the idea of altering election results is so sensitive that administration officials who spoke about it did not want their names revealed.

Some experts on Iraq say such talk could undercut efforts to drum up support for voting in Sunni areas, the paper pointed out. *AFP*

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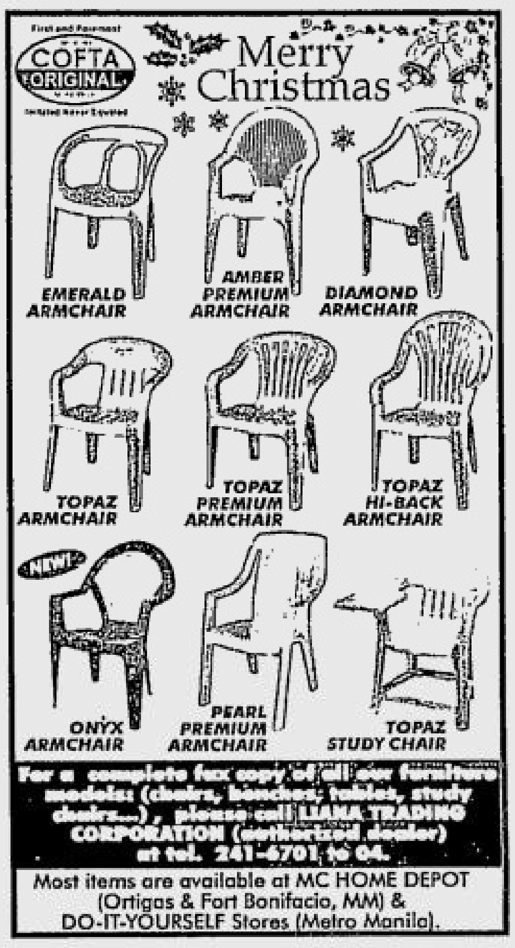
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# Hundreds attend funeral of Japanese Princess Kikuko

TOKYO—Several hundred people attended the funeral Sunday of Japanese Princess Kikuko, an aunt of Emperor Akihito who died at age 92 after years of ill health.

Princess Kikuko, also known as Takamatsu, the name of her royal line, died in a Tokyo hospital of blood poisoning related to kidney problems on Dec. 18.

The death came just hours before the scheduled wedding announcement for Akihito's only daughter, 35-year-old Princess Sayako. The Imperial Household Agency said the wedding was being put off until further notice.

At the Toshimagaoka Cemetery in Tokyo, some 560 mourners, including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Akihito's eldest son, Crown Prince Naruhito, and his wife Princess Masako, paid their respects to the late princess.

Princess Sayako, who is set to marry commoner Yoshiki Kuroda, 39, a childhood friend who works in the city planning bureau for the Tokyo metropolitan government, was also at the funeral.

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, however, did not attend the funeral in accordance with imperial custom.

Kikuko, who would have turned 93 on Sunday, was the widow of late emperor Hirohito's younger brother Prince Takamatsu, who died in 1987.

She will be cremated and her remains will be placed at the tomb of her husband later in the day.

She was the granddaughter of the last of the shoguns, Japan's feudal rulers until the Meiji Restoration of 1868 which gave power to the emperor and marked the start of Japan's modernization.

**JAPANESE Crown Prince Naruhito (right) and Crown Princess Masako paying their respect to the late Princess.** REUTERS

The princess took an unusually modern role for someone so entrenched in the world's oldest monarchy when she wrote a magazine article in 2002 in favor of changing dynastic rules to let a female ascend Japan's Chrysanthemum Throne.

Under the 1948 Imperial Household Law, only a male heir can ascend the throne. No boys have been born to the imperial family since 1965, potentially spelling crisis for royal succession.

Crown Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako have only one child, 3-year-old Princess Aiko. *AFP*

# India to curb export of cheap generic drugs

PARIS—India enters the new year committed to effectively curbing its role as prime world exporter of cheap generic drugs, whose availability is seen as vital to helping the world's poorest sufferers.

The largely western manufacturers of brand-name patented drugs want protection against copying. But those in the front line in the fight against death and disease in the Third World say the lack of generic versions of future drugs will deny the neediest access to the latest medicine.

India is at present the world's third-biggest producer and prime exporter of generic drugs, which are cheaper than drugs sold under patent.

It has hitherto not recognized international drug patents, thereby leaving its pharmaceutical industry with a half-million-strong workforce free to copy foreign products.

But as of January, it will fall into line with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and so will generally not be able to provide cheap copies of future developments in the field of pharmaceuticals, or of drugs marketed since 1995 whose creators have applied for patents.

"This is going to make treatment dearer and there will be no more accessible generic drugs to treat the poorest with latest products," warned the medical charity Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders, MSF). *AFP*

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Toyota Honorary Chairman Toyoda and Philippine President Arroyo offer a toast to the labor and management of Toyota Autoparts Philippines... for the attainment of Toyota global quality standard.

YEAREND REPORT

## Philippine-made transmission assemblies now exported to Toyota Japan

*Achievement of Japan's highest quality standards, a model of successful labor and management cooperation.*

The Toyota Group in the Philippines is forging ahead in the transformation of the country into an industrial hub in the ASEAN for autoparts manufacturing and exports.

This year, the largest Toyota manual transmission manufacturing plant outside Japan — Toyota Autoparts Philippines — started exporting transmission assemblies to Japan, marking a milestone in achieving the highest quality standards of Toyota Motor Corporation of Japan.

Toyota Honorary Chairman, Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda and Senior Managing Director Akio Toyoda joined Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in highlighting this achievement at the company's manufacturing facility in Santa Rosa, Laguna, south of Manila.

"One primary task that we have set up for ourselves is to enhance our contribution to the Philippine economy by expanding exports from the Philippines," said TMC's Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda. "To fulfill this aim, we have now decided to start exporting automotive transmissions to Japan."

"Toyota Autoparts has been assigned by Toyota the role of a productive base for the global market," added Dr. Toyoda.

In response, Dr. George S.K. Ty, Chairman of Toyota Autoparts and of Toyota Motor Corporation said "We are proud that these Philippine-made transmission assemblies are now a major component of the Toyota Global Supply Network."

"This shows our commitment towards the development of the automotive industry," added Dr. Ty.

The Toyota Group in the Philippines has been generating jobs especially for the Greater Manila Area-Laguna grid. Presently Toyota employs more than 10,000 and is active in the continuous skills development programs that empower local engineers and technicians with updated techniques.

The Toyota Group's performance in the Philippines puts both labor and management in a leadership position in the industry. Toyota Motors Philippines' consistent top position in industry sales reflects the harmonious labor and management cooperation in continuously improving quality, efficiency and on-time delivery of automotive products.

"Toyota is determined to help grow the Philippine auto industry, and to contribute to the Philippine economy in the years to come," assured Dr. Toyoda as he and Philippine President Arroyo gave a toast to the men and women of Toyota in the Philippines.

# Thai PM's Muslim insurgency blame-tossing seen as a blunder

BANGKOK—The Thai premier's attempt to shift blame onto Malaysia and Indonesia for his failure to quell an Islamic insurgency in southern Thailand was a blunder that threatened regional ties, analysts warned.

Thaksin Shinawatra's administration had often stressed that mounting separatist violence in the south that has left more than 560 people dead this year was fueled in part by Muslims returning radicalized from study overseas.

But when he stated in a weekly radio address Dec. 18 that Thai militants were training across the border in the jungles of Malaysia, and had received inspiration from extremists in Indonesia, he stirred up a hornets' nest.

"It was a huge breach of diplomatic etiquette for the prime minister, who should not make such comments in public," said Phuwadol Songprasert, a lecturer in regional relations at Bangkok's Kasetsart University.

"Such comments have made both the Malaysian and Indonesian governments unhappy" and could damage their ties with the majority Buddhist kingdom, he told AFP.

Kuala Lumpur, which has detained some 80 alleged Islamic militants of the Al-Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) extremist network, bristled at Thaksin's words, with Premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi denying the charge and expressing disappointment Thaksin did not use diplomatic channels to air his view.

Jakarta called on Thaksin to explain his allegations and threatened to lodge an objection.

Ironically, Thaksin invoked an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) covenant of non-interference in the affairs of its 10 members, when he threatened to walk out of last month's Asean summit if it broached the topic of Muslim unrest in his country.

Most Asean states are to some degree battling local insurgencies, yet no other regional leader in recent years has so bluntly broadened the blame for such unrest to foreign soil.

"When you make mistakes and you can't contain something inside your own country, you therefore try to externalize the problem," said Sen. Kraisak Choonhavan, who chairs the Thai Senate's committee on foreign affairs.

Thaksin backed off from the comments, claiming they had been distorted by the media. But the damage was done. *AFP*

**FOR MUSLIM WOMEN**

**A model presents a headscarf during the "Walk of Islam" fashion show in Berlin Dec. 25. The presentation by German and Germany-based Turkish designers is organized for Muslim women and is the first such event in Germany, according to Werkstatt der Kulturen, or the culture workshop.** REUTERS

# Computer glitch triggers US airport aggravation

HEBRON, Kentucky—Days of bad weather, a computer malfunction and sick airline employees put tens of thousands of travelers in holiday limbo, with Comair canceling all its flights and US Airways trying to reconnect thousands of pieces of luggage with their owners.

Throngs of waiting passengers milled about Saturday at Comair's hub at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. At Philadelphia International Airport, several hundred people stood in long lines at sparsely staffed US Airways check-in counters and piles of suitcases were scattered throughout the baggage claim area.

Cynthia Mayer, waiting to return home to Hilton Head, South Carolina, on a Comair flight from Cincinnati, lost both her flight and her luggage, and said her earliest flight home would be late Monday night.

"They offered me a toothbrush—a kit with a toothpaste and a toothbrush," Mayer said, chuckling.

Comair, a Delta Air Lines subsidiary, canceled all its 1,100 flights on Saturday because computer problems knocked out its system that manages flight assignments, company spokesperson Nick Miller said. The cancellations affected 30,000 travelers in 118 cities, he said.

Miller said Comair planned to have limited flights on Sunday. Officials had not decided which flights or when the planes would begin to take off, he said late Saturday.

The problem was triggered in part by flights canceled Thursday and Friday because of a winter storm that hit Ohio particularly hard, Miller said. The airline had canceled most of its Thursday flights after it ran critically low on de-icer fluid.

"There was a cumulative effect with the canceled flights and trying to get crew assigned that caused the system to be overwhelmed," he said. "It just stopped operating."

US Airways, meanwhile, had passengers and thousands of pieces of luggage stranded at Philadelphia International Airport—for the third day in a row.

The airline blamed the canceled flights—including 143 on Saturday—and baggage backups on severe weather Thursday compounded by record numbers of employees calling in sick, according to a company statement.

Systemwide, the airline canceled 80 flights Saturday and 176 flights Friday, airline spokesperson Amy Kudwa said.

Spokespeople for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which represents US Airways baggage handlers, and the Association of Flight Attendants said they had not organized any job actions.

US Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta has directed senior officials to talk with US Airways management about problems at the airport, Transportation Department spokesperson Robert Johnson said Saturday.

Philadelphia is a US Airways hub, but the baggage backups extended to other East Coast airports.

"They ruined everybody's Christmas," said Shirley Malave, a New Jersey resident who flew from Philadelphia to Florida on Saturday to be with relatives. She arrived, but her luggage did not. *AP*

# Space station astronauts get Christmas delivery

WASHINGTON—An unmanned Russian supply ship docked with the International Space Station on Saturday, delivering food, water and Christmas presents to astronauts running low on supplies.

Progress M-51 linked up with the station at 6:58 p.m. (1:58 a.m. in Manila), bringing 2.5 tons of supplies for American astronaut Leroy Chiao and Russian Salizhan Sharipov, including letters, videos and photographs from their families.

The supply ship completed "a flawless two-day Christmas pilgrimage to the International Space Station," said a commentator on Nasa TV, which relayed live Russian images of the rendezvous.

"Docking occurred 225 statute miles above Central Asia—a flawless approach and docking." Chiao and Sharipov were scheduled to enter Progress for the first time just after 1 p.m. on Sunday.

The two, on the station since October, were asked two weeks ago to cut their daily calorie intake by around 10 percent because they only had enough food for a balanced diet for another month.

Russian officials accused the previous crew of overeating during their six-month mission, leaving a deficit of meat and milk and a surplus of juice and confectionery.

The cargo includes "propellant, oxygen and air to help maintain the station's atmosphere, water and spare parts and experiment hardware," according to Nasa's website.

Nasa said it was carrying about a 112-day supply of food and holiday presents for the crew.

The presents include printers, compact discs, exercise equipment and clothing, according to Nasa TV.

If the fresh supplies had failed to make it to the space station, the crew would have had to cut short its 6-month mission and return to Earth on the Soyuz capsule that is docked there.

Progress M-51 had blasted off two days ago from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, which Russia rents from its former Soviet neighbor. *Reuters*

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# OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

*Publisher* **Isagani Yambot**
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## Time to rebuild

**EDITORIAL**

THE STREAM of donations has turned into a trickle, slowed down by the debris of even more recent events: the death of Fernando Poe Jr., the four-day Christmas weekend holiday in its wake. Donor fatigue may have started to set in, too.

This is unfortunate, because the victims of the recent tragedies in Aurora and Quezon as well as less-publicized areas in Oriental Mindoro and Nueva Ecija remain in dire need. By and large, relief goods organizers no longer solicit or encourage the donation of used clothing; there may be enough of that already. But food remains a priority: canned goods, instant noodle packs, rice, bottled water and the like. Donation of services—a volunteer's time, to sort and repack relief goods; transportation, to distribute the goods; and so on—also continues to be in demand. Cash, of course, is welcome, but best coursed through such reputable and reliable service organizations as the Philippine National Red Cross.

A month after the first calamity struck, relief operations continue to be the order of the day. But already it is time to focus on the next necessary phase: rehabilitation. In this stage, an already cash-strapped national government will have to step up its already considerable efforts to help the hundreds of thousands hurt by the successive typhoons. And the private sector will have to make the transition from traditional donor to partner in community-building.

Priority must be given to helping those who have lost their jobs or their means of livelihood, by giving them a chance to earn again. The national government, working closely with the local authorities, can turn the rehabilitation effort into a temporary income-earner for the victims themselves. The able-bodied, for instance, can be drafted for the short term to help in the inevitable cleanup and repair. Clearing the streets, removing the litter of logs, getting essential services back on track: all these and more will have to be done anyway. Perhaps the authorities can speed it all up by getting help from those who need to be helped. (Besides, the Arroyo administration knows all about short-term but high-impact employment projects, having hired a battalion of vest-wearing street-sweepers in Metro Manila during the campaign.)

Initiatives such as these will encourage more men and women to leave the evacuation centers by day, helping them avoid the welfare rut.

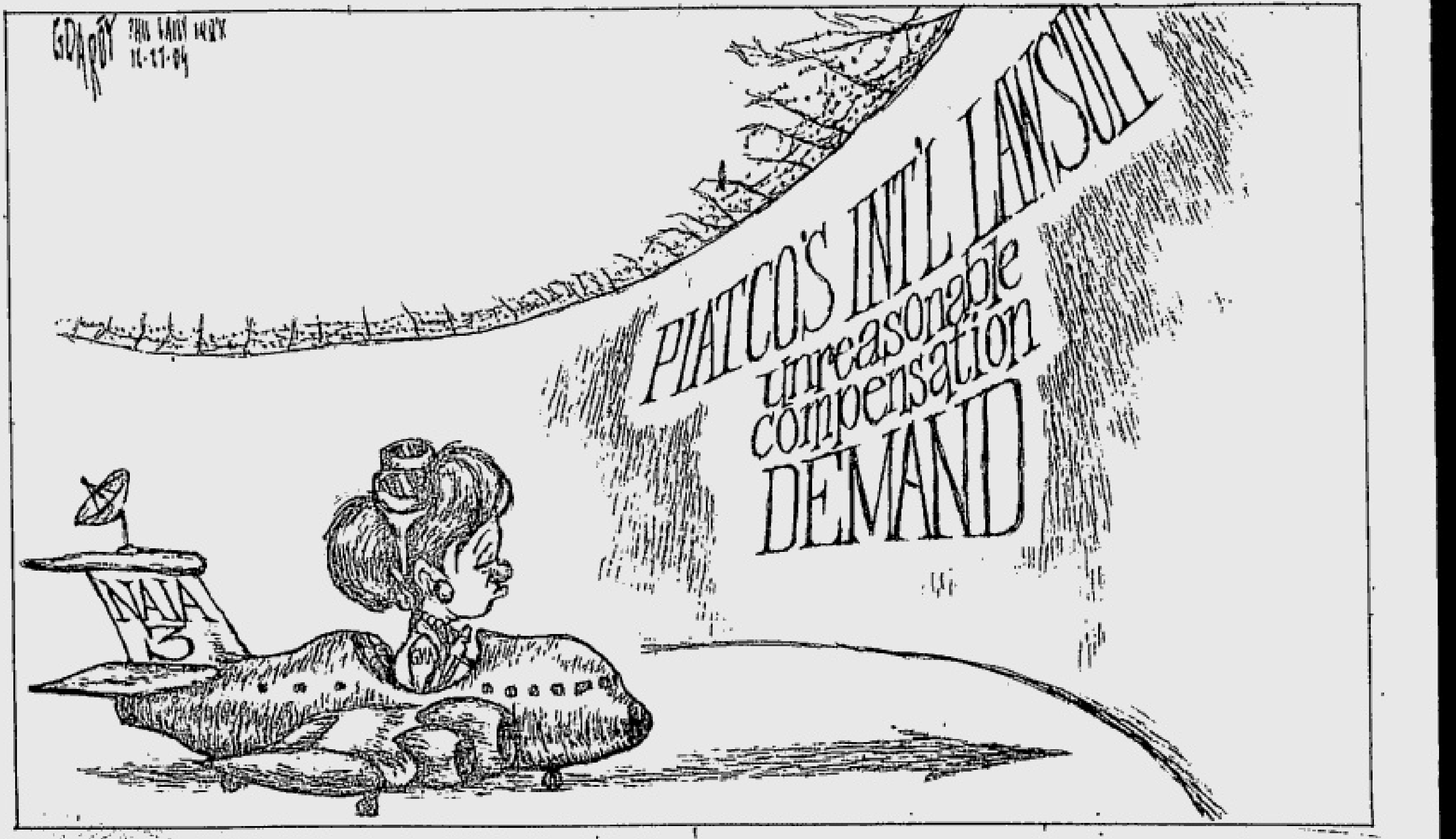
The government must also speed up the work of relocating the displaced. The President has announced the choice of a new housing site, good for about a thousand families. But even she knows this is not enough. This is where the private sector can come in, and for the long haul. Corporate sponsors can help build new houses, on safer ground.

The private sector has successful business models to choose from, including those of the Habitat for Humanity and the Gawad Kalinga project of the Couples for Christ movement. Corporations and their employee-volunteers donate a little money and a lot of time to help build houses in community sites. Instead of simply giving money, the sponsors can roll up their sleeves and actually, painstakingly, put the houses together, working closely with those who will end up living in them.

This model can be useful in the rehabilitation work, too. In the late 1980s, the Metro Manila Development Authority tried to enlist the help of corporations in easing traffic congestion in the capital region, by asking them to sponsor the work of traffic direction in specific intersections. The project did not succeed, not least because of inconsistency in application. But the same principle might work in the rehabilitation of storm-struck areas.

A hundred corporations can "sponsor" a hundred sites, each one good for, say, a hundred families.

Are we dreaming with our eyes open? Perhaps, but both the technology and the simplified process for building simple but sturdy houses, like those of Habitat for Humanity, are readily available. The need is great. And the time is opportune: The calamities have helped focus the nation's attention. A concerted, cooperative effort to rebuild might just revive the nation's spirit.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**AS I SEE IT**

*Neal H. Cruz*

LAST Dec. 8, in the wake of the floods and landslides that wiped out entire villages and killed hundreds of people in Aurora, Quezon and Nueva Ecija, I wrote a column advocating a total log ban. In the course of the discussion, I mentioned some prominent logging families in Mindanao who are now among the super-rich with family members in Congress, who, in the last analysis, will be the ones to craft and pass a total log ban bill. Among the families mentioned were the Plazas of Agusan.

Before Christmas, we received a letter from a member of the Plaza family, Rodolfo G. Plaza, reacting to that column. In brief, he was washing the hands of the Plaza family for the denudation of Mindanao's forests.

"The loggers of the '50s and '60s," (to which the Plaza family belonged) "is different from today's loggers," he said. Meaning to say, "Don't blame us, the old loggers. Blame the new loggers." He said they cut only mature trees and hired forest guards to protect the forests—what's left of them anyway.

It's the old song and dance and game of "finger-pointing." "Who, me? I didn't do nothing. They did." Loggers, old and new, point to the *kaingineros*, the latter point to the charcoal-makers, and the last point to Mother Nature.

But in the interest of fair play, let us read Mr. Plaza's letter *in toto*. Here's his letter, after which I have a few more comments:

"I read with interest Neal Cruz's column titled 'Stop the debate, ban all logging' (PDI, 12/8/04) and as a member of one of the logging families he identified, I felt it my duty to the public to disclose circumstances that Cruz apparently is not aware of, but would be able to share with other unenlightened individuals—for a clearer, more accurate perspective.

"Let the axe fall where it may but for the information of Cruz and the reading public, logging as an economic activity in the '50s and '60s was a totally different business from what it has become in the last two decades. Back then, logging was a major source of RP's dollar earnings. The Plaza family was engaged only in the exportation of timber to foreign markets which dictated certain standards for the same. This means that we only cut trees of really huge diameters. In fact, we had these forest lands guarded to discourage indiscriminate logging and incursions by rural folk who troop to the forest for their immediate needs.

"The Philippine government during that time **did not** and **never required** loggers to reforest. There was no law to that effect. Instead, under Forest Administration Order No. 64, we were required to pay the government certain amounts so that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of old will have the funds to reforest or replant trees; and we **did pay our dues**. Plus, we also replanted and allowed to grow trees that are not of export quality.

"When the Plaza family sold its logging concession in 1976, it was a well-known fact in the province that the forest lands we harvested timber from were **not bald**. We should not be held accountable if, because of the absence of forest guards, '*kaingineros*' or indiscriminate loggers and nomadic forest dwellers suddenly had a field day after we left the logging business.

"Loggers in the '50s and '60s are much like the OFWs of today who are hailed as heroes for keeping our dollar reserves well-stashed. While it is not our intent to be remembered as one-time heroes of the Philippine economy, we do believe some perspective by well-meaning individuals as Cruz is due us.

"At a time in our history when Mindanao was neglected by the central government, we, Mindanaoans, showed self-reliance and even contributed to the national economy. Now, we are being blamed for our industry, out of which the whole population benefited.

"I am not ashamed to be a member of a logging family—because our old business operated under a legal and transparent framework, in compliance with all existing laws then. Thus, I appeal to the sense of fairness and wisdom of all. If we are to truly hunt down the enemies of the environment, let us be prudent in this mission. Let us probe the status of those reforestation funds paid to the environment/forestry officials in the '60s and '70s. The accumulated amount overtime has amounted to hundreds of millions and even today, the amount can be considered staggering. Let us send inspection teams to areas held by the few remaining timber license holders and check how these forested areas are doing; and let us compare these with areas under canceled Timber License Agreements which should be well-preserved. Rather than finger-pointing the 'usual suspects' who are visible, we may be able to find relief in considering 'invisible forces' for a change."

As the saying goes, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If the loggers of the '50s and '60s were really that good, why are the mountains of Mindanao bald? Not only of Mindanao but every mountain that had been subject of a logging concession?

The concessionaires blame the *kaingineros* who come after them. But isn't it the loggers who cut roads through the forest, through which the *kaingineros* gain access to the logged-over areas that they burn and cultivate? No roads, no *kaingineros*, right?

## Not quite the same

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

JOSEPH Estrada spoke bitterly at FPJ's wake. He said he and the departed shared an uncanny fate. Both of them began from humble beginnings and worked their way to the top of the heap by guts, talent and hard work. Both of them believed in the rule of law, and fought for it against elements that would destroy it, such as the "Big Four," a syndicate that once terrorized Manila and Caloocan, which they engaged in the Filipino version of the OK Corral. And both of them were laid low by the hand of treachery, Erap by an impeachment trial based on manufactured evidence and FPJ by an election that reeked of fraud.

Well, the comparison doesn't quite hold, and Erap does his bosom friend ill to have made it. Not all the tearful goodbye and hand-holding can make up for it. It insults the dead.

The one thing in fact that put me off in the riveting spectacle that was the FPJ wake, which I watched with the avidness of a fan throughout last week, was the sight of Erap, Imelda Marcos, Ernesto Maceda and the various creatures from the Marcos and Erap regimes that flocked to Sto. Domingo like vultures. It was a grim reminder of the company FPJ kept, which tainted his presidential bid.

In fact, the one big hope the FPJ camp held out for disbelievers was that FPJ would not go the route of Erap if he won. During the campaign, my movie-director friends hastened to assure me that would be the case, FPJ was not Erap, he would never allow himself to be swayed by Erap and company into the wrong path. That wasn't hard, they said, because he wasn't beholden to them. Though FPJ had done much to get Erap elected—by Erap's own avowal during the wake, FPJ gave up lucrative projects to campaign for him—he never once went to Malacañang to ask any favor. Much to Erap's chagrin.

No, my friends said, FPJ was not Erap. They were friends, but they were not the same. But looking at the faces, or masks, strewn along the front pews at the wake, I wondered if that would have happened. If FPJ would truly have been able to tame the ravenous appetites of his friends, or prevent them from ravaging his rule, when they were as eager to capitalize on his death as they were on his life.

No, FPJ and Erap might have been the best of friends, but the trajectory of their lives was different. While Erap was delivering his speech, I was reminded of an old movie of theirs, the first time I think they acted together, which was "Iyo ang Tondo, Akin ang Maynila." In the movie, they met in the big city and became fast friends after a brief fight, but went on to embark in opposite paths. FPJ went straight and Estrada went wayward. Estrada died in the end, but not without making a redemptive act and ruing a misspent life. Life imitated art—except for the part about making a redemptive act and ruing a misspent life. Erap has yet to do either.

The "rule of law" Erap invokes in his protest against his impeachment is not the "rule of law" FPJ's widow, Susan Roces, invokes in her protest against her husband being cheated. The first is the "rule of law" championed by Marcos, the kind where the law is used to thwart justice. The kind where legal technicalities rather than the spirit of fairness decide right and wrong. Four years ago this month, we saw that in full glory in the halls of the Senate turned impeachment court: Erap's battery of lawyers, using their collective shrewdness to mangle the truth the way Marcos' lawyers—and Marcos himself, who was a lawyer—used to. A collective shrewdness that failed to hide the truth in the end, ironically when applied most ferociously, which was to prevent the second envelope from being opened. It sparked the second Edsa. That was the true rule of law.

More ironically, the "rule of law" Erap invokes is the same "rule of law" Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo invokes to stop FPJ's protest dead in its tracks. It is the same "rule of law" that allowed GMA to bankrupt the treasury to campaign—because the courts ruled there was nothing wrong with it—and allowed the Comelec and Congress to rape the electoral process savagely like Paquito Diaz did with the hapless damsels in FPJ's movies—because the world, including civil society, stood by and applauded.

The "rule of law" FPJ's widow invokes is the other "rule of law," the law that is allied with justice, that sees with the eyes of love and anger what is right and what is wrong. Despite what the judges say, judges who are blind in ways that Lady Justice is not. Lady Justice is blind only to cash, the judges are blind to truth. Despite what government threatens, a government which exists only at the sufferance of the citizens, whose current tenuousness and fragility owe not to any threat of violence from the outside but to the corrosive effect of corruption and rottenness from the inside. Lies are the greatest destabilizing agents of all.

No, Erap can never be the fuel that drives FPJ's electoral protest along. Nor, heaven forbid, can he ever be the rallying point of any move to drive the country along. He does not represent progress, he represents retardation. He does not represent health, he represents sickness. There is only one person who can drive FPJ's electoral protest along, and that is Susan Roces. She has conducted herself amid her travails with a dignity few Filipinos, man or woman, can hope to match. I do not know that she can be the rallying point of any move to drive the country along, but I do know that she has class, which is more than can be said for all this country's self-proclaimed leaders put together. Self-proclaimed because we don't really know if they got elected.

Erap and FPJ didn't quite share the same directions in life. But who knows? Maybe Susan Roces and her husband would. With different results.

# Feeling good

## POLITICAL TIDBITS

**Belinda Olivares-Cunanan**

IN THE PAST two months, many in our midst went through so much suffering in terms of loss of loved ones as well as loss of personal property and opportunities. Thus, in this season of grace, even as we rejoice in those family reunions, we remember those who lost their loved ones. We think especially of the families of Fernando Poe Jr. and KC de Venecia, the young daughter of Speaker and Mrs. Jose de Venecia. For all the bereaved families, the problem, it seems, is letting go of their loved ones, and we pray for this grace for them.

* * *

At KC's funeral, a most appropriate poem, titled "I'm Free," was read by Carissa P. Cruz, her half sister. It was given by Msgr. Nico Bautista, one of the mass concelebrants, and I learned later that he got a copy of that poem in 1993, from the family of a 19-year-old La Salle student named Miro Buffi, who died in an accident. To save a friend on his right, Buffi drove to his right to avoid a truck parked at the Nichols Tollgate. Still, he hit the truck and died instantly. At his wake, his family distributed copies of this poem whose author is unknown.

*Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free.*
*I'm following the path God has laid, you see.*
*I took His hand when I heard His call,*
*I turned my back and left it all.*

*I could not stay another day,*
*To laugh, to love, to work or play.*
*Tasks left undone must stay that way,*
*I found the peace at the close of day.*

*If my parting has left a void,*
*Then fill it with remembered joys—*
*A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,*
*Oh yes, these things I, too, will miss.*

*Be not burdened with times of sorrow,*
*I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.*
*My life's been full, I savored much,*
*Good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.*

*Perhaps my time seemed all too brief—*
*Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.*
*Lift up your hearts and peace to thee—*
*God wanted me now, He set me free.*

* * *

Perhaps because of the many calamities that have visited the nation in recent weeks, readers have asked for a respite from politics, strife and problems. But even without these sentiments, I usually like to end the year by recalling deeds of goodness and kindness that reinforce our faith in one another. We can all use what the media at Bulong-Pulungan term "feel-good" stories.

* * *

For instance, two months ago, Fr. Pierre Tritz, founder and president of Erda Foundation, which helps support children of very poor families in school, wrote to thank me for the article I wrote on the front page of this newspaper, in time for his 90th birthday. My article detailed Tritz's lifework among Filipino street children, which helps prevent the further swelling of our school dropout statistics. Tritz wrote that soon thereafter, his fellow Jesuit, Msgr. Federico Escaler, invited him to give a talk to some people in Forbes Park, Makati, about his very needy students at Erda Technical-Vocational High School. To his surprise, his listeners came ready with checks of P25,000 each, good for one Erda Tech scholar, and Erda Foundation was able to raise P175,000 that evening. Tritz also said that luckily, when the article appeared, Erda had some visitors from Europe who were touched by it.

This old French-born naturalized Filipino priest continues to work hard to help assure the very poor students a rosier future. In this season, some of you, readers, might wish to support his scholars. As the saying goes, "You help a man with alms, and you help him for a day; teach him a trade and you help him for life." Call Father Tritz at 732-4327 and 732-3198.

* * *

In Cagayan de Oro, Jun del Fierro, a Ph.D. in sociology, is so convinced about the work of the Couples for Christ with the poor that he has been a virtual fountain of generosity for the Gawad Kalinga areas in that northwestern Mindanao city. First, he provided the funds to build 50 homes for the poor in Trinitas, each of which costs P30,000. Then, seeing the success of that project, he donated a one-hectare prime land in Pasil, Kauswagan, to the CFC.

Jun del Fierro and his wife, my UP contemporary Cora Salcedo-del Fierro, own and run the Corpus Christi School in Cagayan de Oro. They originally earmarked the Pasil property for the expansion of their school, which has grown from a little nursery school in the '60s to what is now an elementary and high school complex. But later Jun junked the idea and instead donated the property to CFC's Gawad Kalinga. "I'm grateful to God that my family is very supportive," says Jun. He related that he called for a family meeting to consult his children, inasmuch as the donation would naturally affect their inheritance. With parents like Jun and Cora, it was not surprising that their kids consented to give up their land to the poor.

What prompted Jun to do what he did? "To please God," he said. "All is owned by the Lord. He has richly blessed me and my family, and I can't help but give back to Him what is His in the first place." Besides, he says, "He did say that whatsoever we do for the least of His brethren we do it to Him."

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# Written in the stars

## KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

**Noralyn Mustafa**

ACCORDING to Galileo, mathematics is the language in which God created the universe. If that is so, then it must also be the language by which He communicates with us. It is the language that all humanity can understand equally well because it is the only truly universal language.

The universe itself moves on a mathematically precise "never-ending nor beginning ... ever-spinning wheel." While our fate may not lie in the stars, like Shakespeare said, it must be written in the mathematically precise positioning of the stars and planets that have a bearing on the people and events here on earth. That is why I believe in astrology.

And this is the reason why I believe—now more than ever—that it was Fernando Poe Jr. who was elected president of this country.

At the height of the last electoral contest, at least three astrologers, when asked as to who would emerge winner of the presidential race, became evasive, although it seemed quite obvious that each in his or her own way had a name in mind. It turned out the reason they avoided mentioning any name was that they had a common prediction: whoever would win might not last more than six months in office. (One even said she was wishing for one candidate to lose for his own sake.) Pressed as to the reason why, they replied that there could be some upheaval or incapacitation or... death.

It is all very well that FPJ's election protest should die with him. Not many people have that much faith left in our judicial system, even in the Supreme Court. There is something about Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo that breeds distrust in everything she touches, even our most revered institutions.

Whatever the outcome of the canvassing by the presidential electoral tribunal would be doesn't matter anymore. The majority of Filipinos know who really won, and so does the administration. No less than Ms Arroyo herself has confirmed this. That appeal to the Armed Forces of the Philippines by a panicky Ms Arroyo was really ill-advised. Only in the Philippines could there be a spectacle as ludicrous as a head of state begging the military to "stand by me, guard all flanks from all threats to national security." Now, isn't that what the AFP is supposed to do?

But the reason for the tone of desperation was clearly Ms Arroyo's misunderstanding of the term "national security," which she takes to mean her security and that of her family. As she made that call to our soldiers, she sounded like the lord of the manor who ordered the guards to shut all doors and windows to prevent the plague from joining the masquerade inside, unaware that the "red death" was already dancing merrily in the hall.

Now, who would be the foreign investors foolish enough to put their money in a country whose President, at the slightest threat—real or imagined—to her person, would set up a ridiculous fortress of shipping containers?

The people who make up the nation are outside the gates of Malacañang while she, the greatest threat to their security—to their very survival, in fact—sat containerized inside their Palace.

Ms Arroyo never seems to run out of antics to embarrass this country—and I am not even thinking of the way she cuddled up to George W. Bush after he refused to take her phone calls and rejected her attempts to move heaven and earth just to have a 15-minute bilateral with him.

As if these were not enough, while the entire nation stayed up to watch Da King's funeral procession, a most hated visage flashed on the screen—the man she rewarded with the position of justice secretary for being a member of the Gang of Four—to remind viewers about the rule of law!

But the most laughable thing about it was that all that he said in a deeply authoritative and mysterious manner—as though he were in possession of the secret code to fire the nuclear bomb—has been public knowledge for sometime now.

Ignacio Bunye probably thought that even he couldn't carry that one off without breaking down in hysterics.

But Ms Arroyo's worst nightmare is if the military itself, which knows to what extent she and her co-conspirators went to subvert the people's will, would suddenly make a turnabout and refuse to obey her order, on the ground that it is not certain the order comes from lawful authority.

Twice have we abdicated our sovereign right to protect our own will as a people.

We stood by as so-called civil society deposed a president who had garnered the biggest majority in the history of Philippine elections; and we merely watched as he was fingerprinted and made to pose for mug shots like a common criminal. Then we slept soundly while Congress, in the dead of night, railroaded the proclamation of the one who was said to have won allegedly because of massive fraud.

No, it doesn't matter anymore that FPJ's electoral protest died with him. If there is anyone who should pursue it for all its worth, it should be Ms Arroyo herself, for her own sake. She should do so, if only to assure the people that we don't have a usurper sitting in Malacañang this time around.

Uneasy indeed lies the head that wears a crown; paranoid is she who wears a purloined one.

I was not a fan of FPJ—simply because I didn't like "action movies." But Susan Roces was my "idol." When the launching photo of the "face that refreshes" appeared in a movie magazine, framed by an open umbrella she held over her shoulder, I showed it to my mother and told her that if there was a Filipina among the angels, she must look like Susan.

The King is dead. Long live the Queen!

* * *

*Comments to rubaiyat19@yahoo.com*

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# Racism

## THE LONG VIEW

**Manuel L. Quezon III**

*Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! How horrible. How ugly! He looks like a fur seal... Yes, yes, a fur seal with moustache!*

*Let us describe the fur seal: ...I mean the friar, ...*

*His baptismal name is Ano, because he was born on the feast day of Santa Ana; but he gets furious and flies into a rage when he's called Fr. Ano...*

*He seemed meek; but after he had been ordained and sang his first Mass, after five years in the country, eating bananas and papayas and after his appointment as parish priest... he has become so smart that he is now very rich...*

*Let us now consider his figure...*

*Short stature; bloated face forming a disk like a full moon. Round cheekbones.*

*Thick, prominent lips; small eyes roguish and feline; large, reddish nose, with flaring nostrils so he can smell at a distance like a retriever.*

*Hair, the color of maize; the crown, like a coconut shell with a tonsure.*

*Depressed and wrinkled forehead, giving him a supercilious and stern look.*

*Abdomen: above all his abdomen attracts attention because of its huge size; it's more of a promontory than an abdomen; because it ends at a point near the navel...*

*Add to all this a short neck... and you have the finished picture of Fray Botod.*

—Graciano Lopez Jaena
*Fray Botod: (Encarnación Alzona's translation)*

IN A DOCUMENTARY that was shown some years back, former Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez recounted how, as a young student before World War II, he had been bodily thrown out of the Army-Navy Club, which was then exclusively for whites, meaning, off limits to Filipinos. And at that time, the country was already a Commonwealth. An ironic story when you consider how Pelaez was mocked in 1963 for making speeches denying he was a *mestizo*. He felt uncomfortable about being too white and yet he suffered indignities at the hands of people who felt he wasn't white at all.

It was treatment like this, at the hands of white men, that helped foster Filipino nationalism.

Lopez Jaena's sarcasm illustrates his generation's anti-friar attitude, which arose from a kind of resentment over the fact that nearly illiterate and uncouth Spanish peasants could lord it over cultivated Filipino *ilustrados*.

It is said that the best way for a foreigner to win the heart of a Filipino is to treat the Filipino as an equal. Indeed, if it weren't for our tendency to feel so grateful for this equal treatment only to allow ourselves to be duped by foreigners afterwards. This is exactly what happened to Emilio Aguinaldo, his detractors say: the Americans flattered him so much with courtesies that he allowed himself into thinking they were his true allies.

Anyway, when the Spanish Empire gave way to the era of the Americans' Manifest Destiny, Filipinos continued to resent the way they were treated by their colonial masters. In some ways, the Americans were even worse: the *mestizos* felt they could hobnob with the cream of the Spanish colonial dispensation; to the Anglo-Saxon colonizers, they were merely crafty half-breeds. Not that Malay-Filipinos and Chinese-Filipinos stood any higher in the Americans' esteem.

And so, as Spanish racism helped unify Filipinos against Spain, American racism contributed to the agitation for independence which spread particularly among the young Filipinos who were educated under the American regime. Which makes us take a second look at the real extent Filipinos were "successfully brainwashed" by the American educational system.

The reminiscences of two men, who belonged to the generation of Filipinos sent to the US schools as *pensionados*, bear studying. Victor Buencamino, studied at Cornell; Antonio de las Alas, at Yale.

Buencamino noted: "If it was the intention of the American policymakers to send Filipino students to the United States to Americanize them or otherwise make them forget their national aspirations, that intention boomeranged on them. For when Filipinos returned home, they became, as a rule, more fiercely nationalistic than ever." Why was that?

An important factor was racism; In Buencamino's case, "the little incidents of discrimination against Orientals, particularly on the West Coast, rankled long in my mind."

A few years after Buencamino's stint in the United States, racial riots broke out in California and a legislation banning marriage between Filipinos and Americans was passed.

Buencamino continued: "In US classrooms [we] had to join other students in pledging loyalty 'to the United States of America, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.' This exercise evoked a strong wish among Filipino students to pledge loyalty to their own nation." Besides, "Distance and nostalgia had made [us] miss home badly."

So when Buencamino returned home in 1911, he "found it totally revolting that there were too many places where we Filipinos were off limits." "I recalled that even the government-operated Manila Hotel was by practice, if not decree, an exclusive white abode for a good many years."

Up to nearly the outbreak of the war, the Manila Polo Club, the Manila Golf Club, and the Army Navy Club were still exclusively for whites. "Even the YMCA had a separate building for Americans and Europeans." The Polo Club itself would feature in the "nationalist" struggle when Col. Manolo Nieto applied for membership and was blackballed. The decision was condemned as "racist." In solidarity with Nieto, the Elizalde brothers, who were famous polo players besides being industrialists, resigned from the Club and established their own, the "Los Tamaraos" (the name lives on to this day in the "Los Tamaraos" field where the children of the wealthy still take horse-riding lessons). The irony was Nieto and the Elizaldes were *mestizos*.

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# Mailbox trivia

## READERS' ADVOCATE

**Raul J. Palabrica**

AS the country goes on a slow mode in anticipation of the New Year, so have the readers of the INQUIRER who write me whenever they spot anything wrong with the way the newspaper reports the important events of the day. They have temporarily taken a break from their self-imposed mission.

This gives me the opportunity to take up interesting letters from the readers that I was unable to write about earlier due to space limitations. There is a common thread that runs through all these communications: they believe the INQUIRER can influence public opinion.

On top of the list is the suggestion that the INQUIRER come out with an edition written in Filipino with a lower cover price. The readers who broached this idea think the newspaper's present reach is limited to the people who understand English and can spare P18 or more—depending on the place of distribution—every day to get a copy.

They believe that by publishing a reasonably priced Filipino version (the suggested price is P5), the newspaper can increase its readership in the less privileged sector of our society whose principal tongue is Filipino. Proof of the effectivity of Filipino as a means of interacting with the masses is the use of the national language by the country's two major TV stations in their newscasts.

The suggestion is laudable. If there is any goal that a self-respecting newspaper aspires for, it is to be read by as many people as possible. All the efforts of the editorial and business staffs of a newspaper are geared toward achieving high readership in their chosen markets.

### Free newspaper

As early as 2001, the INQUIRER recognized the need to make news and information available through print to the non-English speaking segment of our country. But publishing a separate Filipino edition of the newspaper would entail substantial re-adjustments in the organization (which would translate to additional costs) without the assurance that it would meet its objective.

So rather than reinvent the wheel, so to speak, the INQUIRER pioneered on a "free newspaper" (fittingly named "Inquirer Libre") whose editorial content is written in Filipino and English. Initially, it was distributed—free of charge, of course—to the passengers of the Light Railway Transit and Metro Rail Transit systems that serve several areas of Metro Manila.

Later, as the tabloid-size newspaper gained the readers' respect, its distribution was extended to the customers of the Super Ferry ships at the North Harbor, the greeters' area at Terminal 1 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and 10 outlets of the McDonald's fast-food chain, at no cost to the readers. To avoid the "bastardization" of the Filipino language, the contents of Inquirer Libre are written in simple, readable Filipino, and English words are used only when absolutely unavoidable. In other words, Inquirer Libre's language is in a "Taglish" style that will not make Francisco Balagtas and other deceased proponents of a national language turn in their graves.

Although far from being considered the Filipino edition of the broadsheet, I think Inquirer Libre meets—at least as far as its 150,000 or so readers are concerned—the information needs of our countrymen who prefer to read about the significant news of the day in a language that they are very familiar with.

### Headlines

In earlier columns, I wrote that the "Corrections Box" of the newspaper (which comes out on Page 4 whenever the need arises) aims to correct errors in news reports, especially if they relate to the description of people, places and events.

Since the inception of the box early this year, I have been receiving almost daily letters from the readers pointing out the mistake of this and that item in the news and asking that the correction be made immediately.

Probably as a result of the newspaper's prompt response on these matters, some readers have gone one step further in their "proofreading" chores: they even check the headlines of news reports. The complaints range from "grammatically incorrect" to "exaggerated" to "unsuitable for the subject of the news."

There is this reader with a French-sounding surname who seems to have made a calling out of reviewing the newspaper's headlines or anything that appears above the main body of the news. This may sound like racial typecasting, but the French strike me as the last people in the world to be interested in any language other than their own, so I enjoy reading his letters.

Here's a sample of those letters. Early this month, a foreign news item that appeared in the INQUIRER carried this headline: "Colombia drug boss tastes US prison cell." The reader was quick to react with the following comments: "Did he try to eat it? Please confirm whether the INQUIRER is an English language newspaper or an American rag."

### Finale

For me, what takes the cake in headline review is the admonition of a reader for the newspaper to stop referring to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as "GMA" in the headlines. The reader thinks the use of her initials degrades the prestige of the highest official of the land. She believes the proper word to use is "Arroyo" and that the newspaper should make the necessary adjustments on the front page to accommodate that name.

Whenever I get comments of this nature, I make it a point to explain in the best way I can why the headlines in question are written that way. Often, after I have done that, I get a return reply seeking clarification on the other items that I may have touched in my answer. And the exchange of letters or e-mail goes through another round.

In any event, as 2004 comes to a close, I would like to thank the readers for going out of their way in telling the newspaper what they think is wrong with it and how it can make itself more responsive to the needs of the public.

Happy New Year!

* * *

*The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.*

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# US' double standard of justice

UNION Carbide Corp. has publicly admitted its error in causing thousands of deaths in the Bhopal chemical leak in India. And now the victims are receiving compensation. Moreover, the company is trying to atone for the tragedy by offering to fund scientific researches to further help the victims and to avoid similar incidents in the future.

Foreign media have described this move of Union Carbide as "unprecedented." I hope such unprecedented move shakes up Washington to clean up tons of toxic wastes its military left behind in Subic and Clark. For decades now, the US government has been in a denial mode (despite its own General Accounting Office's findings) and refuses to fulfill its legal obligation in these former military bases.

On the other hand, showing clearly its double standard of justice—for, indeed, this issue is essentially a question of justice—it is cleaning up similar installations in Japan, Belgium and Italy of the same contaminants which continue to debilitate, deform and kill Filipinos. Why is the Philippines not eligible for the same treatment?

The United States has been so explicit with its moral obligation to purge the world of terrorism because it is a lethal threat to mankind. Now the question is, when will the United States apply this commendable moral stand on the issue of the deadly wastes its military left in Clark and Subic?

**—ABIGAIL FLORES,**
**San Juan Baño,**
**Arayat, Pampanga,**
**bluebelle_ph@yahoo.com**

# Warning signs from Hacienda Luisita

REP. Benigno Aquino III tried to justify the Hacienda Luisita massacre by saying that policemen were also hurt; that leftists provoked the strikers. Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that outsiders orchestrated the strike at Hacienda Luisita. The police said the gunshots came from the ranks of strikers. Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said there is nothing immoral or illegal in ordering the military to assist the Philippine National Police in breaking a strike. These statements and more, coming from people in the government, stop short of saying that the strikers shot themselves.

These strikers are the same people who have brought wealth to Hacienda Luisita. They were mobilized to face the tanks at Edsa to support Cory Aquino in 1986.

Joining the fact-finding mission held on Nov. 18, the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR) saw in the people's faces their anguish and raging anger. We heard their stories on what had really happened. "We don't even have food to eat, how could we have bought firearms," a worker insisted on the innocence of the strikers, adding that for 20 years he had been working at Hacienda Luisita and his life has not improved despite the glowing promises.

We, in the CTUHR, are in solidarity with the powerless workers and their families who have been victims most of their lives as they laboriously till the land that will never be their own. The massacre—which took 14 human lives including two children, injured more than 200 and left 100 more strikers missing—not only constituted an abuse of state power, it showed government's utter disregard of the plight of the poor.

The CTUHR condemns in the strongest term this massacre and holds responsible the Cojuangco family, the police, the military and Labor Secretary Sto. Tomas for the use of brute force in the dispersal. The Arroyo administration should answer for allowing the military and the police "to be used as a private army of the Cojuangcos."

Former President Cory Aquino, who seems to be a very prayerful and peaceful person, has done nothing to resolve the labor and land dispute in her family owned 6,000-hectare *hacienda*. It is no wonder that the Mendiola and Lupao massacres happened also in her term.

The farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita are not the only ones suffering from poverty and injustice. Many more all over the country are feeling helpless and hopeless, even as their dignity and rights are being trampled. With the constant price increases, do you need an outside instigator before you cry out for food and jobs? Will you not claim what is rightfully yours for the sake of your hungry children?

Let us reflect on this.

**—SR. EMELINA VILLEGAS, ICM,**
**chair of the board of directors,**
**Center for Trade Union**
**and Human Rights,**
**Room 702 Culmat Bldg.,**
**127 E. Rodriguez Ave., QC**

# Overpriced but substandard

IN RESPONSE to the letter of retired Lt. Gen. Antonio E. Sotelo (PDI, 12/4/04) titled, "Let's bear with pork barrel," we say:

Sotelo is obviously not aware that the estimate for a public works project, which is done by the Department of Public Works and Highways, is usually overpriced and the gargantuan excess is divided among the legislator, contractor and the officials of the DPWH, Department of Budget and Management and local governments. If there is no overprice, the project is done "under specification" or delivered "substandard," and it is from the "savings" where they get their share of the loot.

So in the case of the 2-kilometer road in Fort Bonifacio—linking Bayani Road to the West Sector Road—which was funded by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's pork barrel, we challenge all officials concerned to allow us to scrutinize how much was spent for that road. Also, allow an independent panel of upright engineers to test its quality. We can provide the lawyers and engineers to do the scrutiny.

This will help us see whether the much-maligned pork barrel must be scrapped or not.

**—PROCOPIO S. BELTRAN JR.,**
**president,**
**Nagmamalasakit na mga**
**Manananggol ng mga**
**Manggagawang Pilipino Inc.**
**(Manananggol),**
**Rm. 236 Regina Bldg.,**
**Escolta, Manila**

# Equipping firefighting units is BFD's responsibility

BELINDA Olivares-Cunanan should call the attention of the national government—not the Makati City government—regarding the inadequate firefighting equipment of the Makati Fire Department. (PDI, 12/20/04) The MFD is part of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), a bureau under the Department of the Interior and Local Government. The funding for such equipment and the other needs of firefighting units is the responsibility of the national government, which also decides what firefighting gear and equipment to purchase, and how these are to be distributed among the local governments.

Speaker Jose de Venecia, in a televised interview, said that he has brought this matter to the attention of President Macapagal-Arroyo and that she has promised to act accordingly. It is unfortunate that it had to take a tragedy involving a respected leader of Congress to prompt the national leadership into prioritizing the needs of our firefighters.

In 2002, Mayor Jejomar Binay protested the BFP's failure to provide Makati firefighters with adequate protective gear. That year, the bureau released only eight bunker coats—the protective coats worn by firefighters—for the city's 275 firemen. The bureau did not even provide the firemen with new protective boots.

And while Makati is the country's financial capital, it seems to be at the tail end of the national government's priorities in the distribution of fire trucks and firefighting equipment. Out of the 81 fire trucks purchased by the national government in 2002, Makati got only two fire trucks. Other Metro cities and municipalities got at least three to a maximum of eight fire trucks.

This is ironic because Makati is the biggest collector of Fire Code fees, remitting on the average P83 million a year to the national government. Despite this, or rather because of this lack of assistance from the BFD, the city government has to extend additional assistance to the MFD, providing our firefighters with OBA (oxygen breathing apparatus) units and standard rescue equipment, additional bunker coats and boots. Eight of the MFD's 14 fire trucks were purchased by the city government.

The city also shoulders the maintenance cost and the gasoline expenses of fire trucks, tankers and other service vehicles. Makati firemen also receive additional allowances from the city, and are beneficiaries of the Makati Yellow Card program, which provides subsidized medical and hospitalization benefits. This year alone, the city government's assistance to the MFD reached P15 million.

**—JOSELITO SAN JOSE SALGADO**
**officer in charge,**
**Information and Community**
**Relations Department,**
**City of Makati,**
**3/F Makati City Hall Old Bldg.,**
**JP Rizal St. Makati City**

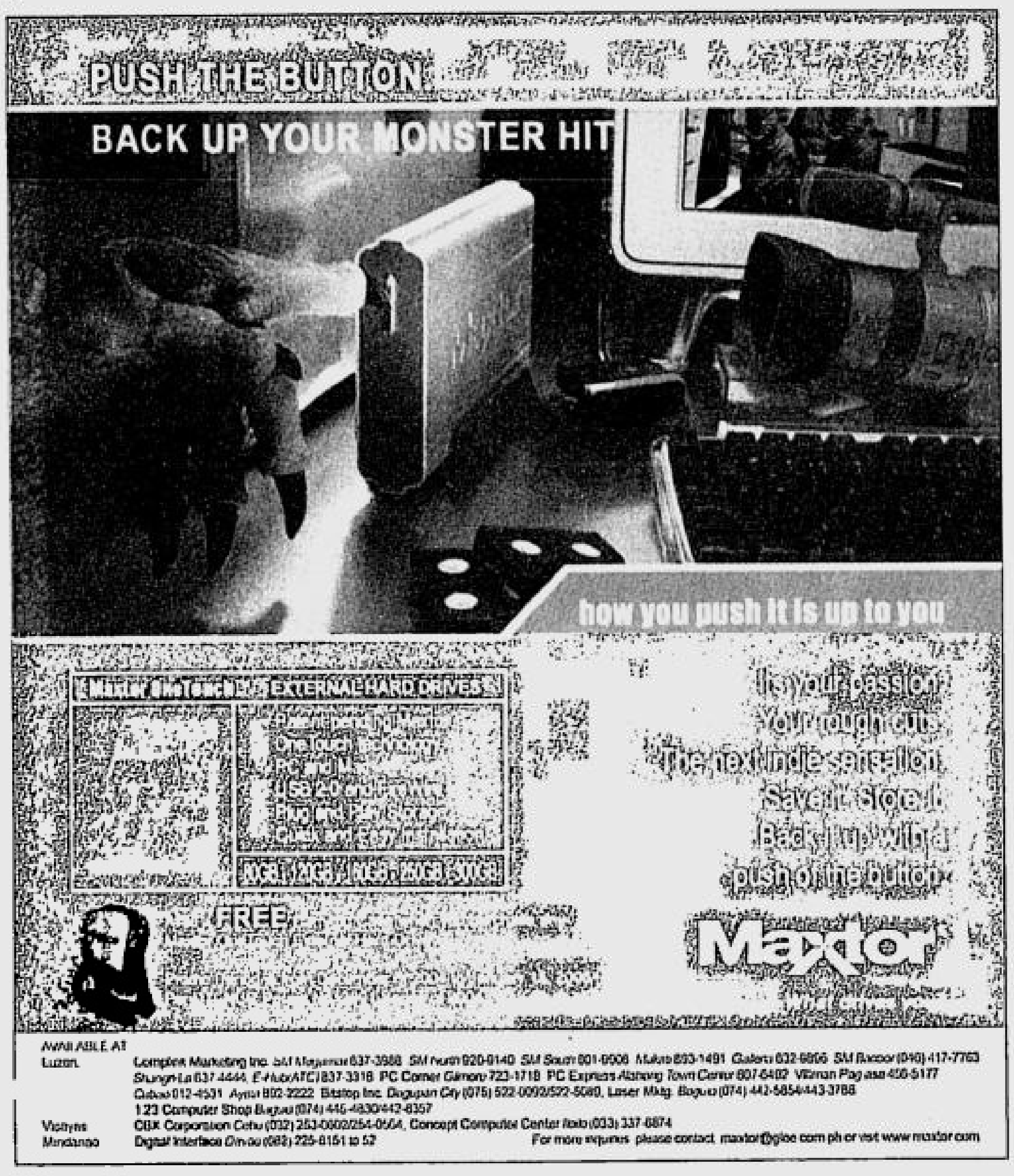
# Prison homes

IT is hard to understand how homes in the Philippines have those steel window grills. We certainly still have them at our own house in Manila.

It really is a shame that because of fear of thieves, we have to imprison ourselves in our own homes.

KC de Venecia could have easily jumped out of her window. She'd probably have broken a bone or two, but certainly she could have survived instead of suffering that painful death. Bless her soul.

**—ED GONZALES,**
**1090 Kaluanui Rd.,**
**Honolulu, HI 96825**



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# Unmentioned charges in previous Meralco explanations

WE would like to thank Elpi Cuna for "enlightening" us further with his response, "Wrong Nasecore computation" (PDI, 12/04/04), to our letter (PDI, 11/30/04).

Without refuting the figures we presented, he mentioned three more items (Napocor's June 2004 GRAM of P0.1367, Napocor's May 2004 ICERA of P0.0727, and Napocor's other adjustments of P0.0154) in explaining why the Meralco power rate increased to P1.5929/kWh instead of the P1.3681/kWh we pointed out in our letter. Interestingly, the May and June recovery charges were not mentioned by Meralco in its previous attempts to explain to the public the increase in the Meralco rate following the P1.075/kWh increase the Energy Regulatory Commission allowed the National Power Corp.

Because of our letter, Cuna gave us the "real" figure of P1.5929 as Napocor's charges going into Meralco's generation charge. Granting, without necessarily admitting this should be, Meralco would still be overcharging its customers by P0.1033/kWh. Consider this computation:

P 1.5929 (Napocor charge per Meralco data)
x .61 (Percentage of energy sourced from Napocor)

P 0.9717 (should be reflected in Meralco bill as pass-on)

P1.075 is definitely higher than P0.9717. And Meralco has been saying in its paid ads it isn't getting anything from the "pass-on." Can Meralco please tell us where the almost P0.10-centavo difference goes?

Also, on further research, we found out that Napocor's effective rate (total charges) to Meralco for October, inclusive of the provisional increase, was only P3.966/kWh. On the other hand, Meralco's independent power producers (IPPs), according to Cuna himself, are now charging P4.50/kWh, which is still higher by P.0534/kWh. The computation below shows that consumers paid more because of Meralco's IPPs (Source: May 2003 ERC decision on Meralco's unbundling petition):

P4.50/kWh —Meralco IPP rate
P2.12/kWh —Napocor rate
P2.08/kWh —Difference

Since Meralco buys 60 percent of its power requirement from Napocor and 40 percent from its IPPs, and Meralco's average monthly sales is approximately 2 billion kWh per month, then 800 million kWh (2 billion kWh x 40 percent) is purchased from Meralco IPPs. At 800 million kWh x P2.08, that would amount to P1.66 billion per month.

Needless to say, as a matter of logic, Meralco should buy cheaper electricity, wherever this is available, for distribution to its consumers. Meralco should go to its IPPs for power only when Napocor's rates go higher or the state firm's supply runs out.

We can assure Cuna and the public that we did not invent our figures; they're based either on Meralco's public statements, the ERC's official correspondence, Napocor replies and newspaper reports.

**—DICK ECHAVEZ,**
**National Association of Electricity**
**Consumers for Reforms Inc.,**
**Unit 616 Roxas Seafront Gardens,**
**Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City**

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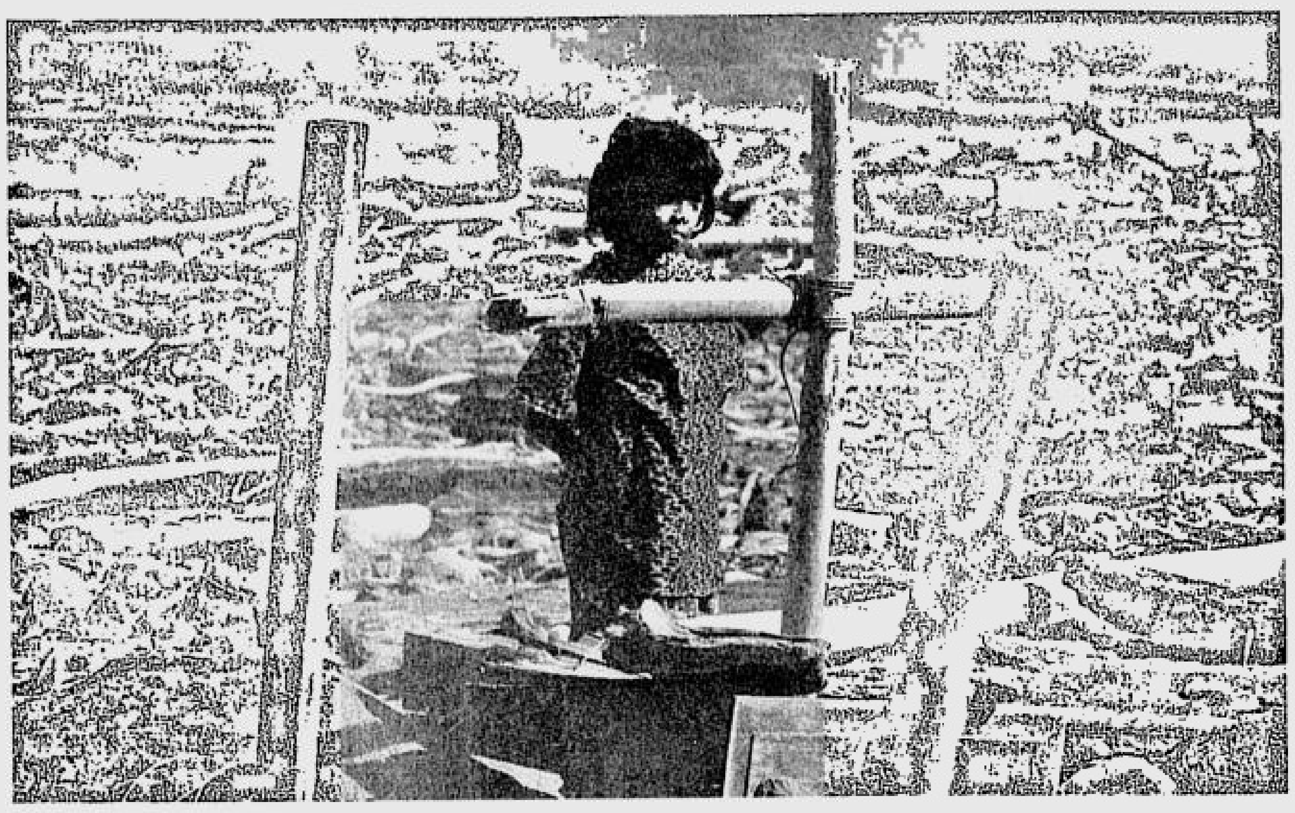

**MASS GRAVE** EDWIN BACASMAS

Her loved ones must have been buried in this mass grave in Barangay Tignoan, Real, Quezon, where several typhoons killed hundreds of residents.

## Volunteer groups build houses in former rebel lair in Negros

**By Romy G. Amarado**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

STA. CATALINA, Negros Oriental—Sitio Kakha in Barangay Talalak here used to be a "no man's land" due to the fierce fighting between government troops and communist rebels from the late 80s to the late 90s.

But the residents are on their way to living a normal life and perhaps, development, with the help of the provincial government and concerned groups.

On Dec. 23, the construction of more than 50 houses started under the Gawad Kalinga Program (GKP) of the Couples For Christ (CFC).

The provincial government allocated P3 million to finance the project. Its partner, the CFC, was in charge of social preparation and later on, livelihood projects for the settlers of the Kalinaw GKP Village.

Each housing unit costs around P45,000 and will be jointly built by the beneficiaries, CFC volunteers, provincial government workers and the Philippine Army. The municipality of Sta. Catalina will provide some construction materials.

The house and lot will be given to the beneficiaries free but they are required to render "sweat equity" or help in the construction of the houses.

Gov. George Arnaiz said it took the provincial government a long time to convince around 700 villagers that the government was sincere in trying to help them.

He said this is because NPA rebels were still frequenting the area since many of their leaders and members are from Kakha.

"This housing project has long been thought of but in the past, many people here did not believe that this will be realized. But I told them that the project is not for anybody's glory or honor. This is for them," Arnaiz said.

To prove this, he said the selection of beneficiaries was left to the discretion of the GKP according to its policies.

"My dream is for these people to become productive and contribute to the economic growth of the province," Arnaiz said.

With the help of GKP organizers, the community finally accepted the project.

"We have realized that the government is sincere in its desire to help us. And we are very happy that finally, the government is now concerned with our plight," said Norvin Cartalla, a leader of the beneficiaries.

Raymund Mercado, CFC area coordinator for Negros Oriental, said the project was also a milestone for the CFC considering that "this is the first housing project under the GKP that is done in the mountains" and in a former hotbed of insurgency at that."

"We have a great feeling of contentment to serve the least of our brothers," said Mercado, who is also the president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Negros Oriental.

## Army project sends villagers away from homes on Christmas

**By Ma. Kristina E. Cassion**
*PDI Mindanao Bureau*

SAN LUIS, Agusan del Sur—A holiday without revelry was what residents of Barangay Balit here described their Yuletide celebration.

Their village had been occupied by government soldiers for a month now and instead of feeling joyous about the holidays, fear is in the hearts of many, according to village councilor Eldindo Cinco.

"They have imposed a curfew on us. Nobody is allowed to go out anymore after 6 p.m.," Cinco added.

Since the start of the military occupation, seven families from Purok 1 have relocated to the barangay hall after soldiers from the Army's 29th Infantry Battalion led by a certain Lt. Pascua occupied their houses.

Tito Sagmitan, one of the evacuees said they had to leave their homes for fear of being "sandwiched" in case New People's Army (NPA) rebels decide to attack the government soldiers.

"If they have to fight this war, they should do it outside our community, the soldiers should not occupy our houses and use us as shields," he added.

Government soldiers arrived in Balit on Nov. 19 to launch a housing project in the community. Using *lawaan* logs cut from Barangay Policarpio, they started building houses and fences.

Municipal government officials said they were not informed of the housing project.

Residents led by Barangay Chair Marcelito Precioso said they already rejected the project during their general assembly, with 65 voting against the project and only one agreeing with it. There are about 250 residents in Balit.

### Not surrenderees

Residents said the housing project is only for the rebel returnees, and that there was no need for them to avail of the project since they were not NPA surrenderees.

"Once we accept that project we will be branded as rebel returnees. We have not forgotten what they have done recently to villagers of Minlinaw and other barangays when they forced ordinary civilians to carry arms and have their pictures taken and reported as NPA surrenderees," Precioso said.

Several residents also complained that the houses intended for other beneficiaries, were built on their lots, without their permission. This, they said, was a form of land-grabbing.

But Col. Johnny Macanas, chief of the Army's 29th Infantry Battalion, said in an interview over radio dxDA, that nothing and no one can stop their project.

"The people of Balit are all NPA supporters. We have already cleared 24 NPA-influenced barangays here [in San Luis] and Balit is the only one remaining. I am here because I was tasked by the national government to clear Balit from the influence of the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines)-NPA-NDF (National Democratic Front). Even if they complain to the whole world, our project will continue," Macanas said.

Datu Loay-Loay of the Banwaon tribe said when a community decides to build houses they will have to undergo certain rituals.

"The soldiers were unmindful of our culture, and, not heeding our protests, they continued with the housing project. Because of this, some parts of our village are now ritually unclean. This will surely anger the spirits," Loay-Loay lamented.

The soldiers have also put up a cooperative store manned by Cpl. Rowena Napungahan. Since the start of the cooperative, nine stores owned by the villagers have closed shop.

> Through the housing project, the military has, in fact, occupied the community

A recent fact-finding mission headed by Fr. Bench Balsamo, MSC, concluded that this is apparently the newest form of militarization among the Banwaon tribe. Instead of simply moving in as they have always done before, now government soldiers do so under the guise of a housing project, despite rejection by intended beneficiaries.

Through the housing project, the military has in fact occupied the community.

"In violation of military regulations, armed soldiers have taken residence in civilian houses and others are living within the community itself. In some cases, the soldiers entered houses and set themselves up without bothering to secure the homeowners' permission. They go around the community in civilian clothes with their [guns,] or sometimes in Army uniforms but without name-cloths. They question where we were going and when we were coming back . . . Is this not militarization?" Bae Emil Digkalay-uban-Tugay, another villager, said.

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# NPA says drive vs private armies in Abra failed

**By Artha Kira Paredes**
*PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

BANGUED, Abra—The deployment of the elite Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police and the creation of the Task Force Abra to dismantle private armed groups (PAGs) in Abra were only a *zarzuela* (stage play), the New People's Army said.

"The SAF is incapable of dismantling the PAGs, as evidenced by the continuing killings in Bangued and neighboring towns. The [police] can never be an effective machinery against warlordism because key PNP officials are subservient to warlords," Diego Wadagan, spokesperson of the NPA's Agustin Beganalen Command operating in Abra, said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER.

Wadagan also criticized the politicians who surrendered their guns to police in September when the INQUIRER broke the story on the presence and influence of PAGs in the province.

He said the guns should have been sold to junk shops because these are "useless scrap metals."

Senior Supt. Rodolfo Ebardo, Abra police director, admitted that no single private army had been dismantled in the province since the deployment of the SAF on Sept. 24.

"The only PAG considered dismantled was the one maintained by barangay captain Jessie Bagay of Namarabar in Peñarrubia town. [But the group] was not on the [list maintained by the police's] intelligence unit," he said.

When asked about the accomplishments of Task Force Abra, Ebardo said these "could not be quantified."

But he said the police drive against the PAGs had decreased public sightings of armed followers of politicians and eased tension among Abreños.

Ebardo said their records showed that from the 117 crimes recorded from Sept. 25 to Dec. 17 last year, only 88 incidents were reported for the same period this year, when the SAF started operating in Abra.

He said the overall crime solution efficiency increased from 76.07 percent in 2003 to 80.68 percent this year.

He said the police recovered 111 firearms and identified at least seven active PAGs.

There are close to 280 firearms that police need to recover, he said.

Director General Edgardo Aglipay, PNP chief, earlier gave Task Force Abra until Christmas to solve the province's problem on the PAGs. But police officials said the mission of the SAF and the task force would be extended.

Wadagan said Abra had two main "warlord groups," those of Gov. Vicente Valera and the 17 mayors who support him, and those of Mayors Marc Ysrael Bernos (La Paz), Mailed Molina (Bucloc), and Cecilia Luna (Lagayan) that is supported by members of the Benwaren and Pacuño families and local politician Dominic Valera.

Valera, who earlier denied that he maintained a private army, led provincial officials in surrendering firearms to the police.

Bernos, Molina, Luna and other mayors also surrendered firearms.

Wadagan said Valera's group "enjoys more support from the powers-that-be, and they continue to hold on to power for nearly 20 years now."

"Military and police [personnel] have, in the past, been maintained and reassigned depending on the whims of this group," he said.

Valera described the NPA's accusations as "unfair."

He said the Cordillera police recently released a list of PAGs supposedly connected to him. He said the list was "biased against me."

"The issue on private armies and peace and order can never be solved unless the PNP and the justice system remain neutral," the governor said.

Bernos denied that he was maintaining a private army. "I only added security when the police gave me one police escort. I need to be candid; all politicians in Abra have bodyguards. With the threats to my life and my family, I am not satisfied with one policeman, that is why I have extra bodyguards," he said.

"Whether they call it PAG or whatsoever, this is the reality," he said.

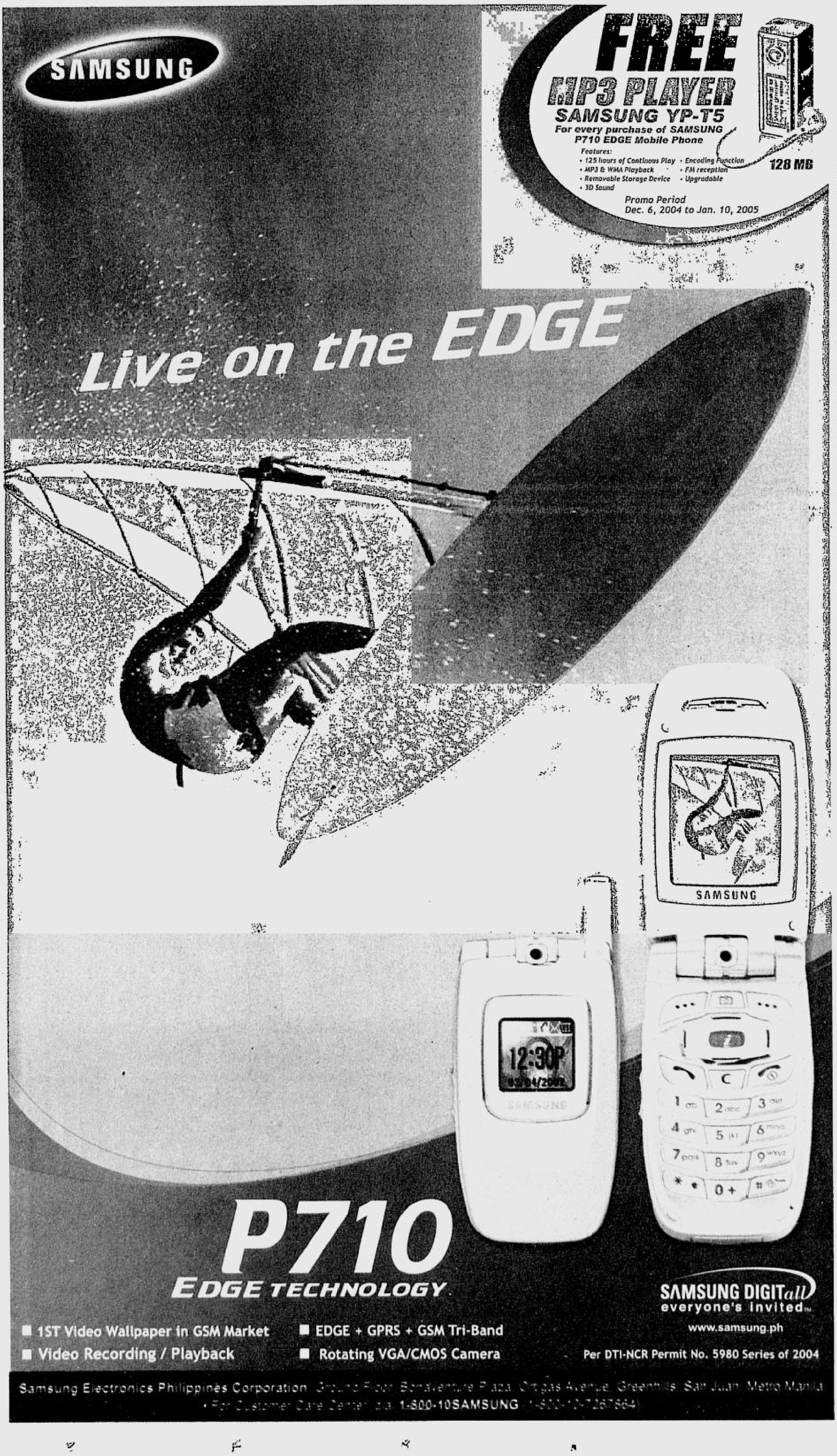
The NPA statement said 55 people had been killed and 60 others wounded, mostly due to warlordism-related incidents since January.

It claimed that the payroll of hired goons totaled P1.22 million a month.

Wadagan said PAG maintainers spent P2 million a month to pay the salaries and training of their members, as well as firearms and bullets.

"The warlords rob the people's coffers to maintain their PAGs and further fatten their pockets and bellies," he said.

"Warlordism deprives the people of their social, cultural and economic well-being and tramples on their civil and political rights."



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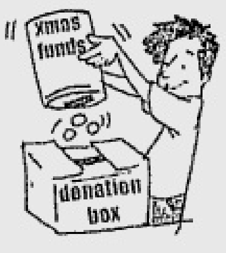
## ROUNDUP

### Christmas relief



CITY OF CALAPAN—The provincial government has joined certain sectors who were not celebrating the traditional Christmas party this year and instead decided to donate the budget for the activity for relief operations. Acting Gov. Ma. Estela Felipa Aceron has issued a memorandum to all department heads and employees that instead of having the party, a relief operation will be held in Roxas on Dec. 28. Gov. Arnan Panaligan is in the US. Employees had been requested to bring goods until Dec. 23. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### Crackdown vs gambling

CITY OF CALAPAN—In his first directive as provincial chief executive after the death of Gov. Bartolome Marasigan Sr., Gov. Arnan Panaligan has ordered the provincial police director, Senior Supt. Marcos Flores, to combat all illegal activities, such as drugs, *jueteng* and *loteng* through continuing operations. Panaligan's second directive ordered the city and municipal police offices to tightly secure the province this Christmas when robbery and snatching cases are common.
*Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

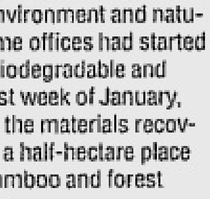
### Waste management

CITY OF CALAPAN—Provincial administrative officers are taking the challenge to manage their local governments' wastes. The move came after a seminar-workshop on ecological solid waste management was held at the provincial capitol on Dec. 14. Mike Jumig, provincial environment and natural resources officer, said some offices had started sorting trash materials into biodegradable and non-biodegradable. In the first week of January, the wastes will be brought to the materials recovery facility for composting in a half-hectare place called "C5," which houses bamboo and forest trees seedlings for distribution.
*Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

### 1 killed in blast

DAVAO CITY—A 35-year-old man was killed while three others were wounded when a grenade exploded inside a house in the Teacher's Village in Nabunturan town, Compostela Valley on Saturday. Reports reaching the Nabunturan police station showed that the Traballo family was having a *despedida* party for a relative when an unidentified man lobbed a hand grenade at the house's roof. Four visitors were hit when the grenade exploded. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

### Eagle released



TUGUEGARAO CITY—Environment officials released in the forest of Dinapigue in Isabela an 18-inch tall Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga Jefferyi*), which was found by a villager along the shores of Palanan, Isabela. Joseph Caligtan was on his way home when he saw the eagle limping and unable to fly. He caught and brought the eagle home to nurture it back to its health. He later turned the eagle over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources suboffice in Palanan for custody. *Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

### Woman slain

MABALACAT, Pampanga—A woman was shot and killed by a lone gunman in Barangay Tabun here Tuesday night. Supt. Rosve Manulid, this town's police chief, identified the victim as Emma Griffin, of Barangay Balibago in nearby Angeles City. Investigation showed Griffin was inside her jeep in front of an eatery here when the gunman came and shot her several times in the head and body. The assailant fled on foot. The victim died before reaching the Tiglao General Hospital here.
*Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

### Weather stations repaired

CITY OF MALOLOS—The Department of Science and Technology is spending at least P42 million for the repair and rehabilitation of 70 weather stations to help increase the level of disaster preparedness, particularly in places frequently devastated by typhoons. Science Undersecretary Fortunato de la Peña said P25 million of the amount would come from the national government's fund for communication and information technology. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

# SBMA execs say Subic not garrison state

By Allan Macatuno
*PDI Central Luzon Desk*

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) belied reports that this freeport zone had turned into "a restricted port and a garrison state," saying it had remained an investor-friendly community.

"Subic is neither a restricted port nor a garrison state and will never be. It has not been militarized contrary to reports," said SBMA Administrator Alfredo Antonio.

Antonio was reacting to allegations by several investors here that the freeport had been a "restricted port" and a militarized area when SBMA officials recently suspended the issuance of import permits.

Some businessmen said the suspension had forced them to close shop and also caused the non-payment of workers' wages.

Antonio denied reports that manufacturers had been prevented from importing raw materials or component parts needed in their own production processes.

"This will never happen in our term because we are committed to transforming Subic into an international service and logistics hub in Southeast Asia as President Macapagal-Arroyo has envisioned and outlined in her 10-point economic program," he said.

He said the President's vision for SBMA would not be realized if the freeport's policies and directions were restricted.

During a discussion with the INQUIRER here on Dec. 17, Antonio said the only thing the SBMA had been strict about was the importation of used motor vehicles, which "was suspended in compliance with the President's directive."

"All the rest—trucks, generator sets, emergency vehicles and other non-restricted items including, of course, raw materials—are issued import permits as usual," he said.

"Sometimes when you are strict, that doesn't mean you are creating a garrison (state) and a militarized area," said retired Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim, senior deputy administrator for operations and chief of the intelligence and investigation office of the SBMA.

# Sorsogon execs question book on marine fisheries

SORSOGON CITY—A book that cited the Sorsogon Bay as being highly polluted created ripples among those in the province that are knowledgeable about the issues it discussed.

The book "Turbulent Seas: The Status of Philippine Marine Fisheries," released recently by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-Department of Agriculture, assessed the various bays and other marine waters in the country, including Sorsogon Bay.

Serafin Lacdang, head of the Fisheries Division of the Provincial Agriculture Office, said some data contained in the book were questionable.

In particular, he questioned, the authenticity of the report contained in the book that stated that the bacteriological pollution in the Sorsogon Bay had reached 780,000 most probable number (MPN) per 100 milliliter, which was way beyond the allowable count of 200 MPN/100ml.

The contamination was being blamed on alleged unabated disposal of human waste directly to the rivers that empty at it.

Lacdang stressed that a similar study conducted by a private group, United Business Technology Inc., showed only a count of 200 MPN/liter bacteriological pollution.

The publication of the book was supported by some 30 foreign and local funding agencies, including the United States Agency for International Development, the German government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Interviewed over local radio station dzRS, Lacdang said he wondered how the authors of the book gathered the data without coordinating with the local agriculture office or any government agency in Sorsogon.

He said the book could be a result of a "table survey," suggesting that no actual research could have been conducted and that the data used were results of table discussions and thus unreliable.

In the same radio program, engineer Beth Fruto of the Environmental Management Bureau of the DENR also said no coordination was made with her office by the book's researchers.

Councilor Nestor Baldon, chair of the city council's committees on health and agriculture, also assailed the authors of the book, saying it could seriously damage the local fishery industry and discourage investors from putting up fishery-related investments in the area.

He urged them to review their data and make the corrections so that its publication would not hinder local development.

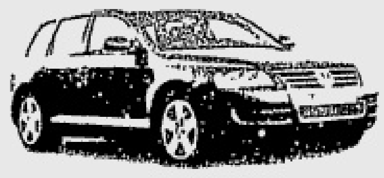
Baldon stressed that the city government, led by Mayor Sally Lee, had been implementing sanitation programs aimed at reducing whatever pollution there was in the area.

He lamented the lack of coordination between the authors and the local government units rimming the bay, which include the towns of Magallanes, Juban, Casiguran, Castilla and Pilar, and this city.

He said the results of research projects as important as those contained in the book should have been presented to the local officials in an exit conference so they could be informed and be guided.

Among the agencies and non-government organizations which supported the publication of the book were the Philippine Environmental Governance Project, Visayan Sea Coastal Resources and Fisheries Management Project, Palawan State University, World Wildlife Foundation, Conservation International Phils., Coastal Conservation and Education Foundation Inc., International MarineLife Alliance, Reef Check, SEAMEO-SEARCA, University of the Philippines, WorldFish Center, The Coastal Resource Management Project, Department of Science and Technology, University of the Philippines-Visayas, and Cebu College and Fish Philippines.

Copies of the book were distributed during the recent national convention of the League of Mayors at the Manila Hotel, a copy of which was acquired by the INQUIRER. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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# Thieves enter 2 pawn shops during holidays

BACOLOD CITY—During the holidays, a different kind of "Santa Claus" went down from the roof of two pawnshops here, not to drop gifts but to steal jewelry.

The thieves gained entry into the shops by boring holes in the roofs of Palawan Pawnshops and VY Domingo Pawnshops, which are adjacent to each other.

But the thieves were able to steal only an undetermined amount of jewelry from Palawan Pawnshops. Their attempt on VY Domingo was foiled when one of them tripped the alarm system, alerting the police.

Senior Insp. Romeo Gomez yesterday said at least three thieves checked into the boarding house located on the second floor of Cheryl's Café, which was right beside the Palawan Pawnshop.

They then bore a hole in the ceiling of their room to get into the roof of Palawan Pawnshop, where they made another hole and climbed down a rope to gain entry into the pawnshop.

They then torched the vault open and took several watches and pieces of jewelry, Gomez said.

Police, however, were not sure when the thieves entered the Palawan Pawnshop because it had been closed for the Christmas break since Dec. 23. The theft was discovered only on Dec. 25.

The thieves entered VY Domingo Pawnshop at about 9:30 p.m. of Dec. 25.

But as they were trying to pry off the padlock of one of the doors in the establishment, they tripped the alarm.

When the lawmen arrived, they called the owner of the establishment to open it and discovered a rope hanging from the roof. Nothing was missing, but they found an acetylene torch and oxygen tank. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

# Calapan bids for Guinness' biggest rice cake, 'bilao'

CITY OF CALAPAN—As part of the city's fiesta celebration on Jan. 1, the city government is bidding for an entry in the Guinness' Book of World Records for the biggest "*biko* (sweetened glutinous rice cake)."

Preparations for the rice cake start today at the Jose Leido Jr. Memorial National High School.

After two weeks, the city government is expected to come up with the world's biggest "bilao" to be made at the school's 400-square-meter basketball court, according to Councilor Allan Froilan Mañibo, promoter and coordinator of the event.

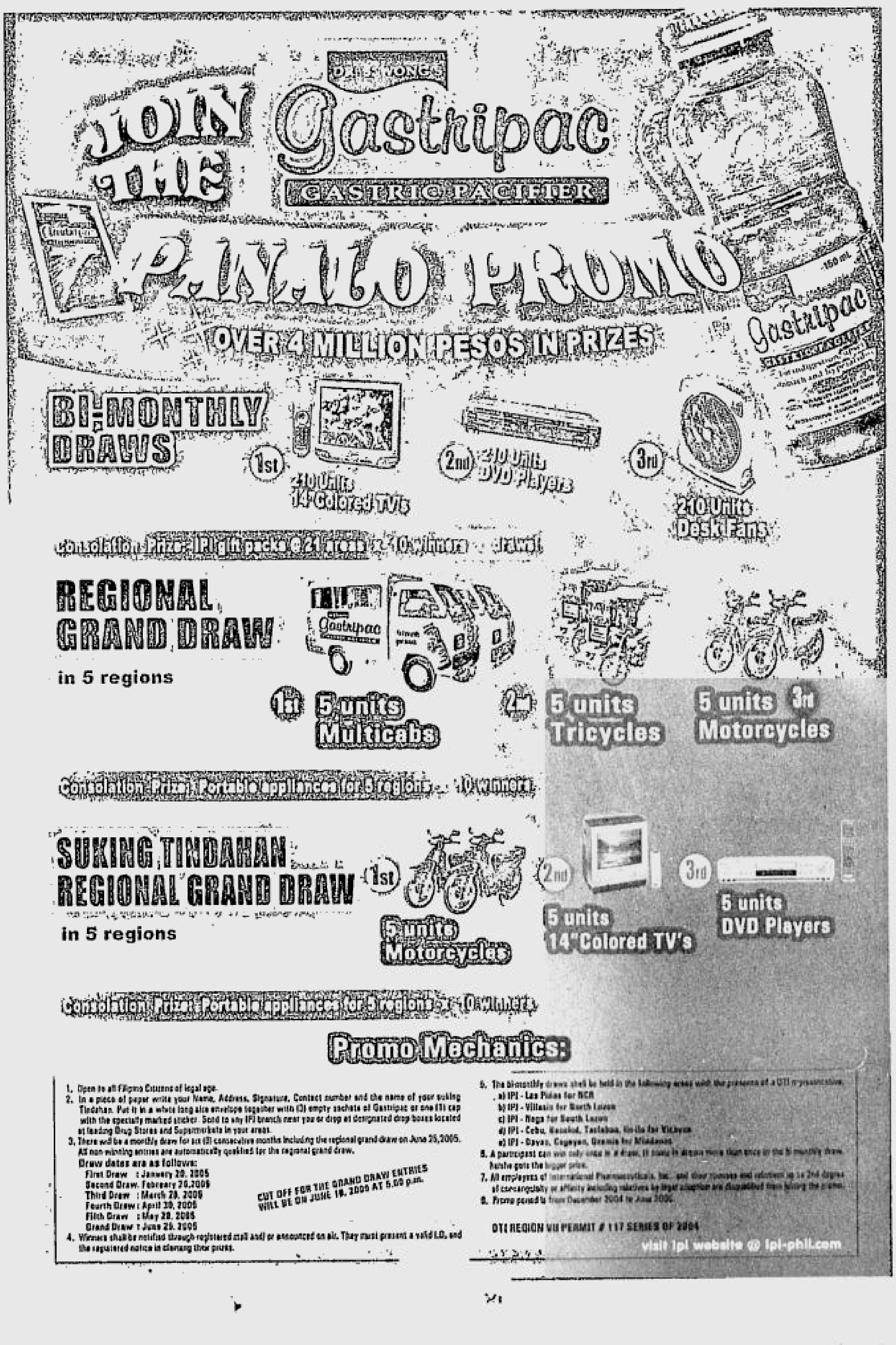
"We'll beat Muñoz City in Nueva Ecija, which recorded, though not registered with Guinness, 2.54 tons on Dec. 12, after using 24 cavans of glutinous rice," said Mañibo. He said Calapan will use 25 cavans.

"Since the government should not spend for fiesta celebration and as required by Guinness, all were solicited from the 62 barangays [of the city]. It's harder to campaign than [to face] this challenge," said Mañibo.

He admitted that the event was not easy because people [were having] financial difficulty.

Ingredients for *biko*-making will be 25 bags of señorita *malagkit* (glutinous rice); 20 bags of brown sugar, 2,700 pieces of coconut to be cooked in 40 large frying fans.

"Thousands will be fed for free at the end of the day. We are inviting people to bring their *bilao* and line up. It's guaranteed clean because the city sanitary inspector will monitor and the police will secure the process," said Mañibo. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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3. There will be a monthly draw for six (6) consecutive months including the regional grand draw on June 25,2005. All non-winning entries are automatically qualified for the regional grand draw.
   Draw dates are as follows:
   First Draw : January 29, 2005
   Second Draw: February 26,2005
   Third Draw : March 26, 2005
   Fourth Draw : April 30, 2005
   Fifth Draw : May 28, 2005
   Grand Draw : June 25, 2005
4. Winners shall be notified through registered mail and/ or announced on air. They must present a valid I.D. and the registered notice in claiming their prizes.

CUT OFF FOR THE GRAND DRAW ENTRIES WILL BE ON JUNE 18, 2005 AT 5.00 p.m.

5. The bi-monthly draws shall be held in the following areas with the presence of a DTI representative.
   a) IPI - Las Piñas for NCR
   b) IPI - Villasis for North Luzon
   c) IPI - Naga for South Luzon
   d) IPI - Cebu, Bacolod, Tacloban, Iloilo for Visayas
   e) IPI - Davao, Cagayan, Ozamis for Mindanao
6. A participant can win only once in a draw. [illegible] bigger prize.
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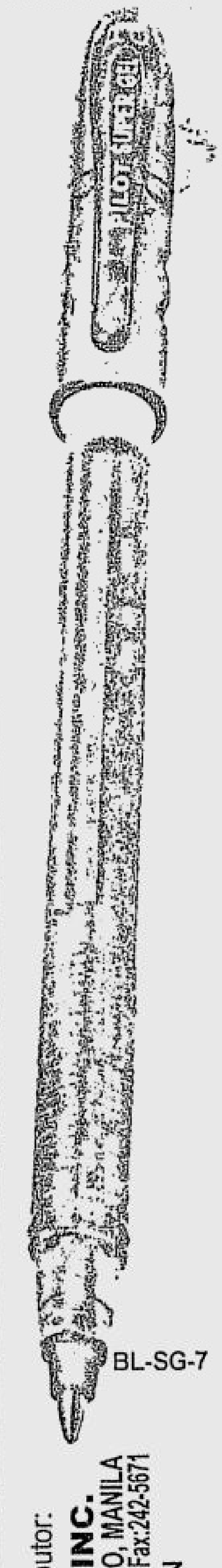

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# Dumaguete plays Santa Claus to 10,000 poor families, school personnel

DUMAGUETE CITY—The city government played Santa Claus to 10,000 indigents, children and public school personnel here.

In keeping with its tradition, the city government, with the help of the private sector, distributed on Wednesday food packages worth P121 each to 6,500 indigents here.

There were more beneficiaries this year compared to 5,000 in previous years.

Mayor Agustin Perdices said more people were now suffering from the brunt of the economic crisis.

"At least, more people will be happy this Christmas," he said.

Perdices said the city spent about P700,000 for the project, taken from the rental fees of Quezon Park, which was temporarily transformed into a "Baclaran-type" trading area.

Also on Wednesday, 3,500 children from the city's 30 barangays were treated to burgers and soft drinks, courtesy of the city government, civic groups, business establishments and private individuals.

The city government also gave cash gifts of P2,000 each to 600 teaching and non-teaching personnel of the City Schools Division.

Administrator Dominador Dumalag said the city government appropriated some P1.2 million for the project.

The P2,000 cash gift would be a great help to many teachers, as most of them are receiving minimal takehome pay due to deductions from loans incurred by many of the teachers. *Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

# 'Grinch' robbers strike in N. Ecija

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga — Like the Grinch that stole Christmas, thieves struck right on Christmas Day in two separate highway robberies in Nueva Ecija.

Passengers of a Dagupan Bus lost P200,000 to robbers in the Science City of Muñoz past 7 p.m., said Nueva Ecija police chief Senior Supt. Alex Monteaguido.

The passengers were trying to make it home to their families for the holidays.

In Carranglan town, three men stopped a Dangwa Bus bound for Nueva Vizcaya and divested bus driver Alfredo Costales of his salary of P6,000.

Monteaguido said the robbers in the two incidents wore bonnets to cover their faces.

Nueva Ecija police, he said, had tried to prevent highway robberies by riding as marshals on buses and trucks. But not every bus is assisted because policemen are few, he added. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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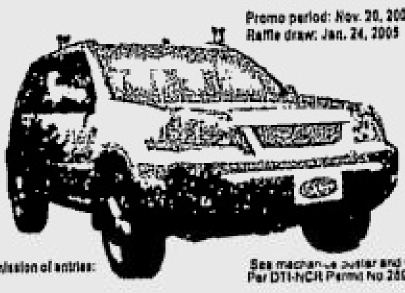

Deadline for submission of entries: Jan. 15, 2005
See mechanics poster and flyers for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No 2893 Series of 2004

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# Tidal waves kill 7,000 in 5 Asian countries

From page A1

the sea for a Hindu religious bath to mark the full moon day, police said. They said 20,000 people were evacuated in four districts.

The US Geological Survey's website recorded the magnitude 8.9 earthquake off the west coast of northern Sumatra, 1,620 km northwest of Jakarta. It was centered 40 km below the seabed. Aftershocks struck in the magnitude 7 range.

The earthquake was the world's fifth most powerful since 1900 and the strongest since a 9.2 temblor slammed Alaska in 1964, US earthquake experts said.

The force of it shook unusually far afield, causing buildings to sway hundreds of miles away, from Singapore to the city of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, and in Bangladesh, hours after the region's Christian communities had finished Christmas celebrations.

Initial damage centered on the Indonesian province of Aceh on northern Sumatra. Dozens of buildings were destroyed, but as elsewhere, much of the death toll appeared to come from onrushing floodwaters.

Towns nearest the epicenter were leveled by tidal waves, which killed at least 408 people and left bodies wedged in trees as the waters receded, Indonesian officials and witnesses said. Officials warned the death toll could rise dramatically.

"I saw nine people killed by flooding, including four children," a witness who gave his name as Mustafa told el-Shinta radio station from Banda Aceh.

A spokesperson for Indonesian state-owned Garuda Airlines said Banda Aceh's airport was flooded and planes were unable to land.

## Sri Lanka disaster

In Sri Lanka, the government called Sunday's events a national disaster and appealed for emergency relief.

### IN THE KNOW

### Tsunami? Tidal wave? Seismic sea wave?

TO REFER to a tsunami as "tidal wave" is incorrect. Although a tsunami's impact upon a coastline depends on the tidal level at the time it strikes, tsunamis are unrelated to the tides.

The term "seismic sea wave" is also misleading. "Seismic" implies that an earthquake produces a tsunami, but landslides or meteorite impacts can also cause a tsunami, and all are nonseismic events.

In the ocean, a tsunami can be hardly noticeable. But as it travels to shallower water near the coast, it slows down and become compressed, causing it to rise. From the coast, a tsunami may appear as a rapidly rising or falling tide, or a series of breaking waves that may reach 10, 20 and even 30 meters.

In August 1976, a tsunami from the Moro Gulf slammed into the southwest coast of Mindanao minutes after a quake that measured 7.9 on the Richter scale. The tsunami killed over 3,000 people. *PDI Research*

SOURCES: PDI ARCHIVES, PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF VOLCANOLOGY AND SEISMOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL TSUNAMI INFORMATION CENTER WEBSITE HTTP://WWW.PRH.NOAA.GOV/ITIC/

"It is a very tragic situation," said police spokesperson Rienzie Perera, adding that some hospitals were unable to treat the injured.

Death, devastation and pain were everywhere in this tropical island country of 19 million people.

"I counted 24 bodies in a stretch of only 6 km," said Gemunu Amarasinghe, an Associated Press photographer who went to one of the affected areas south of Colombo. "I saw bodies of children entangled in wire mesh" used to barricade seaside homes.

"There were rows and rows of women and men standing on the road and asking if anyone has seen their family members," said Amarasinghe. "I also saw people bringing in bodies from the sea beaches and placing them on roads and covering them with sarongs."

## Disastrous holidays

Holidays turned to disaster in southern Thailand, which welcomes hundreds of thousands of tourists to its southern beaches during the Christmas season. At least 168 people died, 1,900 others were injured and many more—reportedly including foreign tourists on diving excursions—were missing, authorities said.

Five- to 10-meter-high waves crashed onto beaches and roadways in Thailand.

"Suddenly this huge wave came, rushing down the beach, destroying everything in its wake," said Simon Clark, a 29-year-old photographer from London who vacationing on Koh Ngai island near Krabi with his girlfriend. "People that were snorkeling were dragged along the coral and washed up on the beach, and people that were sunbathing got washed into the sea."

"Just out of nowhere, suddenly the streets (were) awash and people just running and screaming from the beach," John Hyde, a vacationing Australian state lawmaker, told Australian Broadcasting Corp. television.

"People were getting swept along still on their motorbikes," Simon Morse, another Australian tourist, told the ABC. "There were cars that had been picked up by the storm surge and they were getting pushed down the road, taking things out as they went."

The owner of two resorts on Phi Phi island—where the Hollywood blockbuster "The Beach," starring Leonardo DiCaprio, was filmed—said that 200 of his bungalows were swept out to sea, along with some of his employees and customers.

"I am afraid that there will be a high figure of foreigners missing in the sea, and also my staff," said Chan Marongtaechar, who was in the Thai capital of Bangkok at the time. He estimated that 700 people could have been on the beach.

## Worst affected area

In India, the worst affected area was Tamil Nadu state, where 700-800 people are reported to have died, followed by Andhra Pradesh state where the toll was about 200.

At least 102 people were killed in the federally administered territory of Pondicherry near Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry Chief Minister N. Rangasamy said. At least 14 people were killed in Kerala state and 14 in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Patil said.

Among those killed in Andhra Pradesh were 32 people—15 of them children—who had gone into the sea for a Hindu religious bath.

Tamil Nadu's beaches turned into virtual open-air mortuaries as fishermen's bodies washed ashore, and retreating waters left behind others killed inland.

Sea water flooded the streets of Cuddalore town, flipping over dozens of cars and leaving some vehicles perched atop road dividers.

Residents of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh state spoke of four-meter (12-foot) walls of water slamming into the shore.

## Maldives flooded

High waves inundated the Maldives, a string of 1,192 coral atolls off the southwestern coast of India, injuring one Italian tourist and forcing the airport to close, an official said. A British man died from a heart attack minutes before the waves hit.

In Malaysia, authorities closed some beaches to the public after 25 people were swept away near the northern city of Penang. The victims were believed to be mainly tourists and included some foreigners, a police spokesman said. Their identities were not immediately known.

At least two children were killed when a boat capsized in Bangladesh, local authorities said.

Officials received reports that some vessels capsized at sea, but there were no further details, said Low Kong Chiew, director of the state government's Seismological Division. *AP*

## *The fifth largest quake since 1900*

WASHINGTON—The earthquake that shook southern Asia on Sunday was one of the most powerful since the start of the 20th century, the US Geological Survey said.

"We've just updated it to 8.9 magnitude. That makes it the fifth largest earthquake since 1900," said Julie Martinez, geophysicist for the US Geological Survey's Earthquake Hazards Program in Golden, Colorado.

It was the largest quake in the world since 1964, she said. That year, a major earthquake hit Alaska's Princ]e William Sound.

Sunday's quake struck at 7:59 a.m. (0059 GMT) off the coast of Aceh province on the northern Indonesian island of Sumatra and appeared to swing north into the Andaman islands in the Indian Ocean.

It triggered a tsunami that killed hundreds in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and India.

"These big earthquakes, when they occur in shallow water ... basically slosh the ocean floor ... and it's as if you're rocking water in the bathtub and that wave can travel basically throughout the ocean," USGS geophysicist Bruce Presgrave told the BBC.

He said there had been no signs of the impending quake.

"Unfortunately, we are not able to predict earthquakes at this time and one of the big reasons is typically these big earthquakes occur with no warning, no foreshock activity or anything like that," he added.

As the Earth moves and its plates hit each other, it breaks in one place and pressure builds up in a different area, Martinez said. When that pressure increases, another earthquake occurs.

"About 1,000 km of the Andaman thrust (or faultline) broke, which is a huge area," Martinez said. "This doesn't occur that often. To have a break along that long of a fault line ... is more unusual."

The magnitude of the quake increased the likelihood of aftershocks—the tremors that follow as minor readjustments occur along the fault after the main shock.

"I would say it makes aftershocks more likely and it makes them more likely to be large," Presgrave said. "We have already seen one aftershock of magnitude 7.3 and there have been a large number of aftershocks in the magnitude 5-6 range."

Martinez said aftershocks were usually in more or less the same area.

"Because of the size of this quake, you will see more quakes in a larger area because the break or the fault line is larger." *Reuters*

# No hit list of counterrevolutionaries—Sison

From page A1

CPP-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines, said it was not at all a list of criminal suspects subject to arrest and investigation by the NPA.

On the list were Bello, Rosales, Ric Reyes, Boy Morales, Gani Serrano, Manjette Lopez, Liddy Nakpil, Sonny Melencio, Nilo de la Cruz, Ike de los Reyes, Tito de la Cruz, Caridad Pascual, Popoy Lagman and Arturo Tabara. Lagman was assassinated on Feb. 6, 2001 and Tabara on Sept. 26, 2004.

## Shallow

Morales, a former agrarian secretary, said the diagram was inaccurate. He said the groups to which he was identified [Institute for Popular Democracy and Akbayan] did not enjoy an observer status in Socialist International.

"I'm familiar with international relations. The study (conducted by the CPP's International Department) was shallow, but it may serve their purpose," he said.

Morales said the diagram did not reflect a deeper understanding of relationships among groups in the international arena. "Many international parties have multiple partners in different countries."

In his statement, Sison said the allegation of Bello and Rosales, whom he did not mention by name, was "a gross act of mendacity, malice and slander to misrepresent the diagram as a 'hit list' and to use the misrepresentation in order make me the target of character assassination."

## Psywar operation

"The purported letter writers are obviously engaged in a spin or psywar operation. This is orchestrated with similar operations of the military propaganda mills and is timed with the 36th anniversary of the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines," Sison said. The CPP celebrated its 36th anniversary yesterday.

Sison said that based on his experience, he did not think that the revolutionary forces would take any punitive action against anyone just because he or she holds pseudo-revolutionary or even blatantly counterrevolutionary ideas.

"The revolutionary movement respects the freedom of thought and expression. As so many documents issued by the revolutionary movement declare, it can seek to punish only criminal acts like murder, espionage, gross malversation and robbery," Sison said.

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**COMMUNIST** Party supporters mark the party's 36th anniversary with a rally at a busy commercial district in Manila. JESS YUSON

He said he had yet to receive a copy of the open letter. "I intend to answer the letter directly and fully as soon as I receive a copy of it, unless its full substance is already reported by [Juan] Sarmiento [Jr.]" Sison said. Sarmiento's article on the open letter of Bello and Rosales appeared as banner story of the INQUIRER yesterday.

Sison accused the letter writers of assisting the United States in maligning and criminalizing him and setting him up for physical attacks by the Central Intelligence Agency and sabotaging the peace negotiations between the Philippine government and the NDF.

He said his first impulse was to ignore the report as "the lie reported is so blatantly false and the malicious intent to smear me so obvious."

"But I have decided to confront the lie because it can do harm one way or the other to myself and to others, including the purported letter writers," he said.

Sison expressed concern for the safety of Bello and company "not because the revolutionary forces might hold them culpable for crimes, which can be proven in the people's court, but because the murderous type of rabid anticommunists in the military and police might harm these pseudo-revolutionaries and then blame the crime on the revolutionary forces."

He recalled that since the 1960s, there were instances when rabid anticommunists in the military and police had engaged in bloody crimes of intrigue. "They kill certain persons or make them disappear and then make the revolutionaries the scapegoat."

He cited "Oplan Jericho," which according to him was designed by the United States and the military in 1988 to kill him in the Philippines or abroad and then put the blame on communists.

Like Bello and Rosales, Nilo de la Cruz said their being tagged counterrevolutionaries meant that they were enemies and targets for attacks.

"Even if your are not on the hit list, you become an open target because you are called a counterrevolutionary," said De la Cruz, whom Ang Bayan identified as someone belonging to the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa/Revolutionary Proletariat Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade.

He lamented that groups not influenced by the (CPP) were being tagged its "enemies."

The Partido ng Manggagawang Pilipino, which was founded by the Lagman, scoffed at the CPP claim that there was no "hit list."

"It is common knowledge in progressive circles and admitted by CPP cadres in private, that there exists a hit list of Rejectionist leaders. In fact, many of those on the list have indeed been eliminated and the CPP has admitted to practically all of the killings," PMP spokesperson Patricio Ramirez said in a statement.

Ramirez said the "lies" peddled by the CPP against its ideological rivals in the Left were the preparatory stage to any eventual violent settlement of scores. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.*

# Sunken boats lose legacy of relics

From page A1

Cucuro, Magsaysay, where the remains of the PT boat lie on a big rock about five fathoms deep.

"This is a legacy" and should be protected as a significant piece of history, De la Torre said.

In Tayabas Bay fronting Unisan, Quezon, divers have found the wreck of a 400-year-old Chinese wooden vessel looted of its cargo. Even parts of the vessel itself have reportedly been stolen, provincial board member Gerald Ortiz learned.

Ortiz said he had asked the police to secure the area in order to preserve what is left of the vessel.

The shipwreck, measuring about 30 meters long, lies some 50 meters below the water.

## Quezon in Palawan

De la Torre said the American convoy led by MacArthur passed through Palawan before proceeding to Zamboanga and then to Australia and the United States.

He said it was then practical to pass through Palawan from Corregidor because of the bad weather and big waves.

By De la Torre's account, Quezon and MacArthur stopped at the Tagkawayan Cove, some 20 hours from Corregidor by submarine, and walked along the shore because the Philippine President needed some fresh air.

On the shore, Quezon spoke with some residents, among them De la Torre's distant aunt Alejandra Abrina and her husband Virgilio, now deceased.

Because of this piece of history, Palawan Board Member Raffy Liggayu has proposed that Tagawayan be declared a historical point.

## Engine trouble

The PT boat—20 meters long and five meters wide—developed engine trouble in Tagawayan Cove and was left there, De la Torre said.

He said the boat was still intact although some parts had been removed. He expressed apprehension that it would soon be completely gone if nothing is done.

De la Torre learned that parts of the boat were being sold in Cebu because it is nearer to Magsaysay than the Palawan capital, Puerto Princesa City. (It takes about 20 hours by boat to get to Magsaysay from Puerto Princesa.)

He said it would be impossible to pull up the boat because of its weight. He suggested that a buoy be built to bar treasure hunters and fishermen from the area.

## Porcelain jars, plates

Ortiz, chair of the Quezon provincial board's committee on tourism, culture and arts, said the government should protect Punta Point in Tayabas Bay, site of the Chinese shipwreck, from unauthorized explorations.

He quoted a resident of Unisan as saying that some divers had swept the wreck clean of even the shards of porcelain jars and plates.

Such porcelain shards can be sold to antique shops in Manila for P1,500 to P5,000 each, according to Ortiz.

"An unbroken artifact can fetch up to P500,000," he told his colleagues, and presented a couple of shards from a porcelain jar that, he said, were among the discovered artifacts.

Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, who lives in Unisan, said the Chinese vessel was estimated to be around 400 years old.

He confirmed to the INQUIRER in an earlier phone interview that the shipwreck had been looted of its cargo.

He said that contrary to reports, the vessel found at the bottom of Punta Point was not a Spanish galleon but an old Chinese ship.

Unisan Mayor Nonie Puache confirmed that divers had found broken plates and jars in the shipwreck. "And they were plenty," he said.

Quezon Board Member Lourdes de Luna said she had also personally seen some of the salvaged artifacts.

## French divers

Documents gathered by the INQUIRER from Unisan police and the National Museum showed that the Far Eastern Foundation for Nautical Archaeology had been allowed to explore an ancient shipwreck in Punta Point off Unisan.

The permit was issued by museum director Corazon Alvina on Nov. 8. It is valid until May 8, 2005.

Supt. Christopher Daquigan, Unisan police chief, said at least six French divers and two museum officials arrived in the area aboard a yacht and conducted exploration activities on Nov. 12-14.

He said members of the local and maritime police and the Coast Guard handled security during the exploration.

Daquigan also confirmed that precious artifacts were found at the site.

"But the divers told us that they had retrieved nothing of scientific value, only broken parts of jars and plates. They sawed off parts of the wooden hull for study," Daquigan said.

## Local divers

Another resident said that before the arrival of the professional explorers, local divers using plastic hoses and air compressors for underwater breathing had already retrieved at least 26 porcelain jars and around 500 porcelain plates.

Quezon Rep. Rafael Nantes said the government should salvage the shipwreck because of its historical value.

"Whatever remaining artifacts therein should be preserved. It is part of the country's rich cultural heritage," he said.

**AERIAL** view of the damage caused by a tsunami in the island resort of Phuket in southern Thailand. Officials said one tourist was killed and four or five more might have been swept out to sea. REUTERS

# The day the sea rose

**PEOPLE** walk through debris of their houses destroyed in tidal waves on the coastal areas in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Giant sea waves crashed into coastal villages over a wide area of Sri Lanka, killing at least 300 people and displacing 100,000 others. AP

**PEOPLE** look at a car and debris that was washed by tidal waves in Madras. AP

'Just out of nowhere, suddenly the streets (of Phuket were) awash and people just running and screaming. . People were getting swept along still on their bikes'

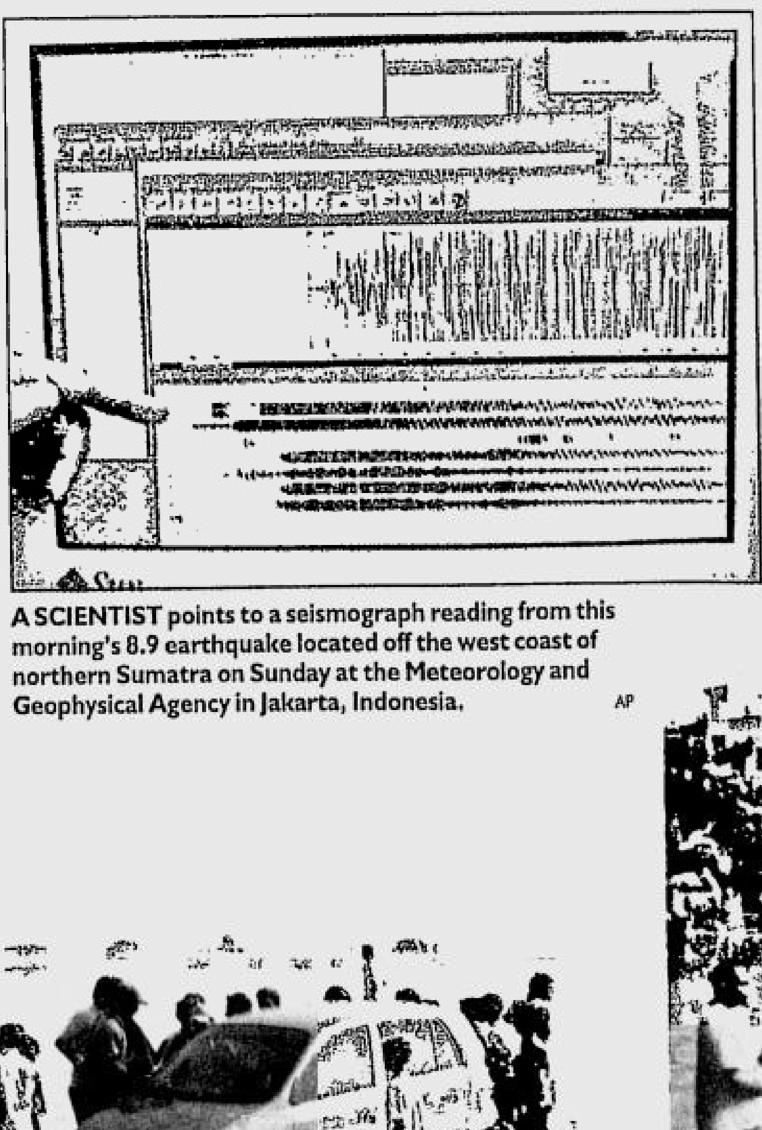
COAST GU
CG806

**AN INDIAN** Coast Guard helicopter airlifts a fisherman from Marina beach in the southern Indian city of Madras. Hundreds have been killed after the tsunami hit India's southern coast. REUTERS

**RESCUERS** carry a girl from the Marina beach in Madras. REUTERS

**VOLUNTEERS** carry the body of a woman who was killed by tidal waves at the Marina Beach in Madras, in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. AP

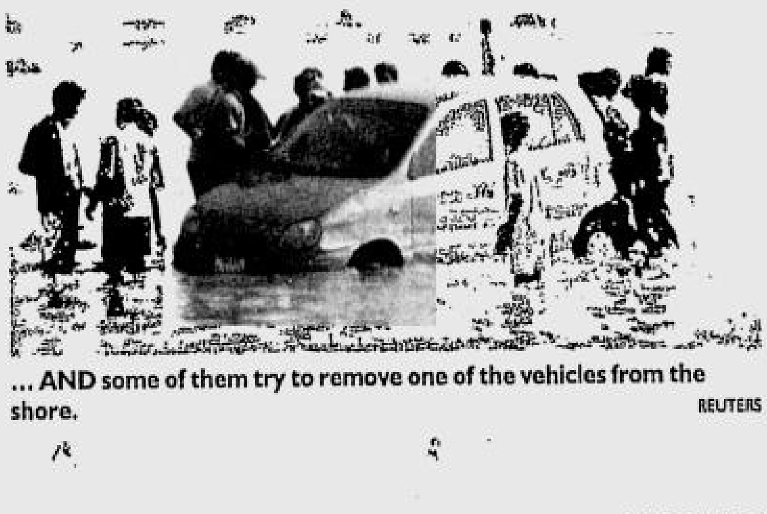
**EUROPEAN** tourists walk the beach of Kata assessing damages done by the tidal wave that hit Phuket, Thailand. AP



**A SCIENTIST** points to a seismograph reading from this morning's 8.9 earthquake located off the west coast of northern Sumatra on Sunday at the Meteorology and Geophysical Agency in Jakarta, Indonesia. AP

**A TV** grab shows people walking to safety after the tsunami hit Madras. REUTERS

**PEOPLE** stand near damaged vehicles after a tsunami hit the Marina beach in Madras ... REUTERS



**... AND** some of them try to remove one of the vehicles from the shore. REUTERS

**SUERTRES** 3 8 0
(In exact order)
**EZ2** 4 2

**SUPERLOTTO 6/49**
5 18 19 30 36 44

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METRO

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**SWEEPSTAKES**
4 1 7 6 2 1 0

# WPD secures possible terror targets

**FIRE WATCH**
A resident of Barangay Barangka Drive in Mandaluyong nervously peers out the window to watch flames come near her house.

BOY CABRIDO

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ALREADY on their toes because of the coming anniversary of the Rizal Day bombings, police in Manila were put under greater pressure to secure possible terrorist targets with the defusing of a bomb inside a passenger bus Friday.

"We have target hardening. And we keep close watch of vital installations, the tourist belt, commercial establishments and the LRT (Light Rail Transit)," said Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, director of the Western Police District (WPD).

On Friday evening, Christmas Eve, the driver of a Cainta-bound, airconditioned G Liner bus found a bomb in a backpack concealed under a seat of the vehicle.

## Rizal bombing anniversary

The discovery and defusing of the bomb came a week before the fourth anniversary of the Rizal Day bombings that killed 22 people and injured more than 100.

On Dec. 30, 2000, five bombs planted in different places in Metro Manila exploded one after the other.

One of the bombs blew up an airconditioned bus as it travelled along Edsa, killing a man.

Asked whether the WPD already had leads on who might have planted the Christmas Eve bomb, Bulaong said investigation and intelligence gathering were on-going.

"We are still determining the source of the bomb," said Bulaong.

However, a ranking officer of the WPD Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD) said they already had leads on who planted the bomb.

"We already have suspects based on the device which we could [compare] with other bombs we have recovered," the official said. "But I could not reveal them as of yet."

## Al-Qaeda connection?

Earlier, a Camp Crame based explosives expert told the INQUIRER that the make up and the materials used in Friday's bomb were similar to those seized from the apartment of alleged Al-Qaeda member Ramzi Yousef in 1995.

Yousef had been known to have trained members of the Islamic extremist Abu Sayyaf terrorist group in making such explosives.

The WPD-EOD officer called on residents to help them be on the lookout for suspicious persons and packages.

He said residents could call the police.

"We are now watching over possible targets. The public must take caution of anything suspicious. The bomb squad is on call 24 hours," said the officer.

# Electrical overloading eyed in big Mandaluyong fire

By Ruth L. Navarra

FIRE, which residents and fire officials attributed to a possible overloading of electrical circuits, hit a densely populated community in Mandaluyong City yesterday afternoon.

As of presstime, hundreds of residents were fleeing their homes along Kayumanggi and Agudo Streets in Barangay Barangka Drive.

Initial information from the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) in Mandaluyong said the blaze was reported to them at 5:23 p.m.

Strong winds caused flames to quickly spread among houses of light materials that stood close together.

The community was on a hill overlooking the Pasig River.

At 6:12 p.m., the blaze went on uncontrolled, prompting fire officials declared it a major incident.

"It is a big fire because it is three alarms closer to general alarm," said Fire Officer 3 Federico Macandog.

According to Macandog, firemen had a hard time reaching the area because it could only be accessed through one street.

Most of them had to climb rooftops, dragging their hoses, to reach burning houses.

While any formal investigation into the cause of the fire could be started, BFP probers already aired suspicion that it could have been triggered by an electrical overload.

Fire started as night fell and people were starting to turn on lights and other electrical appliances and gadgets.

Fire investigators added that an overload could have occurred in one of the numerous illegal connections that were allegedly common in the area.

"*Malamang dahil 'yan sa kuryente. Marami kasing jumper diyan sa Agudo* (It's probably electrical because there are many illegal connections over at Agudo)," a female fire victim told newsmen.

# Pasig judge found dead in QC home

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A DAY after Christmas, a regional trial court judge was found dead after an apparent suicide inside her bedroom in her Quezon City home.

The body of Judge Alicia Co, 52, of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 161, was discovered by her sister, Yolanda Jimenez, at about 2 p.m.

Co had a bullet wound in the right temple with no apparent exit wounds, said investigator PO2 John Sales.

Police said they found a .380 caliber pistol beside the judge's body.

Jimenez told police that she went to her sister's house at 35 Champaca St., Roxas District, to check on Co.

The judge, police quoting Jimenez said, had been depressed over the past few days for still unknown reasons.

Sales said Jimenez was worried about Co so she decided to pay the judge a visit. The sister went straight to the room of Co and found her lying dead in bed.

Co's three maids—her only companions in the house during the incident—told police that they still saw Co go out of her room 10 minutes before the discovery of her body.

They did not hear a gunshot.

The judge reportedly had a son in his 20s but he was not at home during the incident.

According to Jimenez, Co had been complaining about her eyes, which had been operated on three months ago.

Despite the time that had passed, her eyes reportedly continued to bother her.

# Spat over pedicab fare leads to slay

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

AN OLD couple and their son were killed on Christmas Day after a misunderstanding over pedicab fare turned into a family feud that sent a policeman to a shooting rampage in Caloocan City.

Police identified the victims as Isidro Centeno, 65, his wife Leticia, 65, and their son, Servando, 38, all of Barangay Maypajo.

Their neighbors Remenardo Santiago, 68, and Joven Dimaapi, 32, were wounded, police reported yesterday.

The suspect, PO2 Reynaldo De Castro, 40, of the Caloocan City Police Mobile Patrol Unit, managed to escape.

Probers gathered that the brother of De Castro, Rodolfo, got into an argument with Servando, a pedicab driver, at about 9 a.m. on how much fare Rodolfo's friend should pay for a pedicab ride.

Caloocan police investigation chief Napoleon Cuaton said a fistfight erupted after which Rodolfo went home and sought help from his brother.

De Castro then had a confrontation with the parents of Servando, Cuaton said.

Minutes later, Servando's brother, SPO2 Ariel Centeno of the Police Security Protection Office arrived and allegedly punched De Castro after an argument.

Furious, De Castro drew his handgun and opened fire, hitting Servando and bystanders Dimaapi and Santiago.

De Castro tried to run after Ariel, but was met by the latter's parents, whom the suspect also allegedly shot.

The three were brought to the Martinez Memorial Hospital where the couple died. Servando was transferred to the Manila Central University Hospital where he died while undergoing treatment, Cuaton said.

# MMDA to deploy secret agents

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is taking the hands-on implementation of the law to another level.

Starting January, the MMDA plans to dispatch traffic enforcers in plainclothes to reduce, if not stop, jeepneys from trip-cutting and colorum vehicles from plying Metro Manila's roads, said MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno.

Nacianceno admitted that they had not yet assigned enforcers for this campaign, but they might initially deploy 50 enforcers in two-man teams. These teams would be sent to stake out areas with highest reports of colorum and trip-cutting operations.

"Like any regular passengers, our enforcers will ride jeepneys and vehicles with white plates," said Nacianceno. "When drivers break the law, our enforcers are empowered to issue tickets of violation right there and then."

The problem with colorums and trip-cutting, Nacianceno said, is that no witness comes forward and follows through with a complaint.

"When the offenders contest the tickets issued to them, the case usually goes to their favor because of lack of witnesses," he said. "This is what we hope to eliminate with plainclothes enforcers because they will become the witness."

He further said enforcers to be deployed for this task would not need any special training. *Ruth L. Navarra*

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Mangulat

**BASKETBALL:** NBA-Celtics vs Spurs; 8 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Boston faces San Antonio

**AMERICAN FOOTBALL:** NFL-Browns vs Dolphins; 9:30 a.m. (r-4 p.m. and 12:30 a.m.); ESPN—Cleveland and Miami tangle on the gridiron.

**TENNIS:** US Open 2004 Rewind; midnight; STAR Sports—Relive the classic quarterfinal encounter between Roger Federer and Andre Agassi.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

# PSA fetes Pagulayan, Rivero and Figueroa

NOT ALL their exploits translated to victories, but their inspiring stories were enough to make an entire nation proud.

For how can one ignore the gutsy stand put up by taekwondo jin Mary Antoinette Rivero and archer Jasmin Figueroa in the Athens Olympics or of Alex Pagulayan, carrying the Canadian colors but remaining very much Filipino at heart, winning the World Pool Championship in Taipei?

Definitely not the Filipino people. More so, the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA).

On Jan. 13, the 90-member PSA will give out special awards to Pagulayan, Rivero and Figueroa in its Annual Awards Night set at the Manila Pavilion.

The three are among the top achievers for the year to be honored by the country's oldest media organization in simple, 90-minute rites sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Colors, Photokina, Pagcor, San Miguel Beer, the Philippine Sports Commission and NBN 4 as its carrier station.

LPGA champion Jennifer Rosales and boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao have been named Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year, respectively, the highest accolade given by the PSA.

PAGULAYAN

RIVERO

PDI PHOTOS

Before a hostile crowd in Taipei last July, the 26-year-old Pagulayan completed his date with greatness after turning back local bet Chang Pei-wei in the World Pool championship finals, 17-13.

A jubilant Pagulayan offered the victory to the Filipino people in worldwide television after the victory.

"I know the people in the Philippines are rooting for me and I dedicate this victory to all the Filipinos who have been very supportive," said Pagulayan in the post-game interview.

He later took the first flight out of Taipei to Manila along with patron Putch Puyat and celebrated his victory in the country for about a week.

In winning the world's 9-ball title, Pagulayan became only the second Filipino after the legendary Efren 'Bata' Reyes to win one of billiards' most prestigious titles.

And proof of his desire to represent the country in future international meets, he later applied for, and was granted, dual citizenship.

A month after Pagulayan's stirring triumph, it was Rivero and Figueroa's turn to shine in the Summer Games.

Figueroa came up with a fiery performance in the archery range that proved to be the first source of pride for the 16-man RP delegation to the Athens Games.

The young archer from Tondo, who played in the ratings round a day before the Games officially started, put on a dazzling show in the round-of-64 of the individual competition, her final arrow hitting the target and knocking off former world champion and two-time Olympic medalist Natalie Valeeva of Italy, 132-130.

PSA FETES/ A29

## AWARDEES

SPORTSWOMAN OF THE YEAR
**Jennifer Rosales**

SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR
**Manny Pacquiao**

SPECIAL AWARDS
**Alex Pagulayan**
**Jasmine Figueroa**
**Antoinette Rivero**
PRESIDENTIAL AWARD
**Alvin Patrimonio**
MAJOR AWARDS
**Mark Paragua** (chess)
**Nelson Mariano III** (chess)
**Liza del Rosario** (bowling)
**Django Bustamante** (billiards)
**Efren Bata Reyes** (billiards)
**Rhyan Tanguilig** (cycling)
**Gabriel Espinas** (amateur basketball)
**Angelo Que** (golf)
**Patti Dilema** (horseracing)
TONY SIDDAYAO AWARD
**Wesley So**
LEADERSHIP AWARD
**Celso Dayrit**
HALL OF FAME
**Mona Sulaiman** (athletics)
**Lydia de Vega** (athletics)
**Caloy Loyzaga** (basketball)
**Lauro Mumar** (basketball)
POSTHUMOUS
**Boy Arazas**
**Agustin Cailao**
**Fely Fajardo**
**Purita Negal Jacinto**
**Faustino Medina**
**Boy Mendez**
**Ernie Singson**
**Teddy Alfarero**
**Rudy Samson**
**Freddie Dean**
CITATIONS
**Randy Suico**
**Gabby dela Merced**
**Chot Reyes**
**Matteo Guidicelli**
Don Bosco
**Michelle Bumgarner**
**Glenn Aguilar**
**AR Ramos**
**Anjou Jellicoe**
**Mauricio Yolanda Mendigoria**
**Juvic Pagunsan**
**Enrique Rafael Rosales**
BEST Center
**Henry Dagmil**
Tagaytay City
**Marichi Gandionco**
**Kenneth San Andres**
**Miguel Tabuena**
**JR Gonzales**
**Totoy Tingzon**
**Hermie Esguerra**
**Ato Badolato**
**Jayvee Agojo**
**Rene Catalan**
**Roy Vence**
RP archery team
**Arvin Ting**
**Tyson Sy**
Solar Sports
OUTSTANDING NSAs
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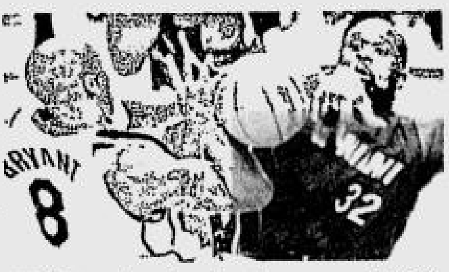
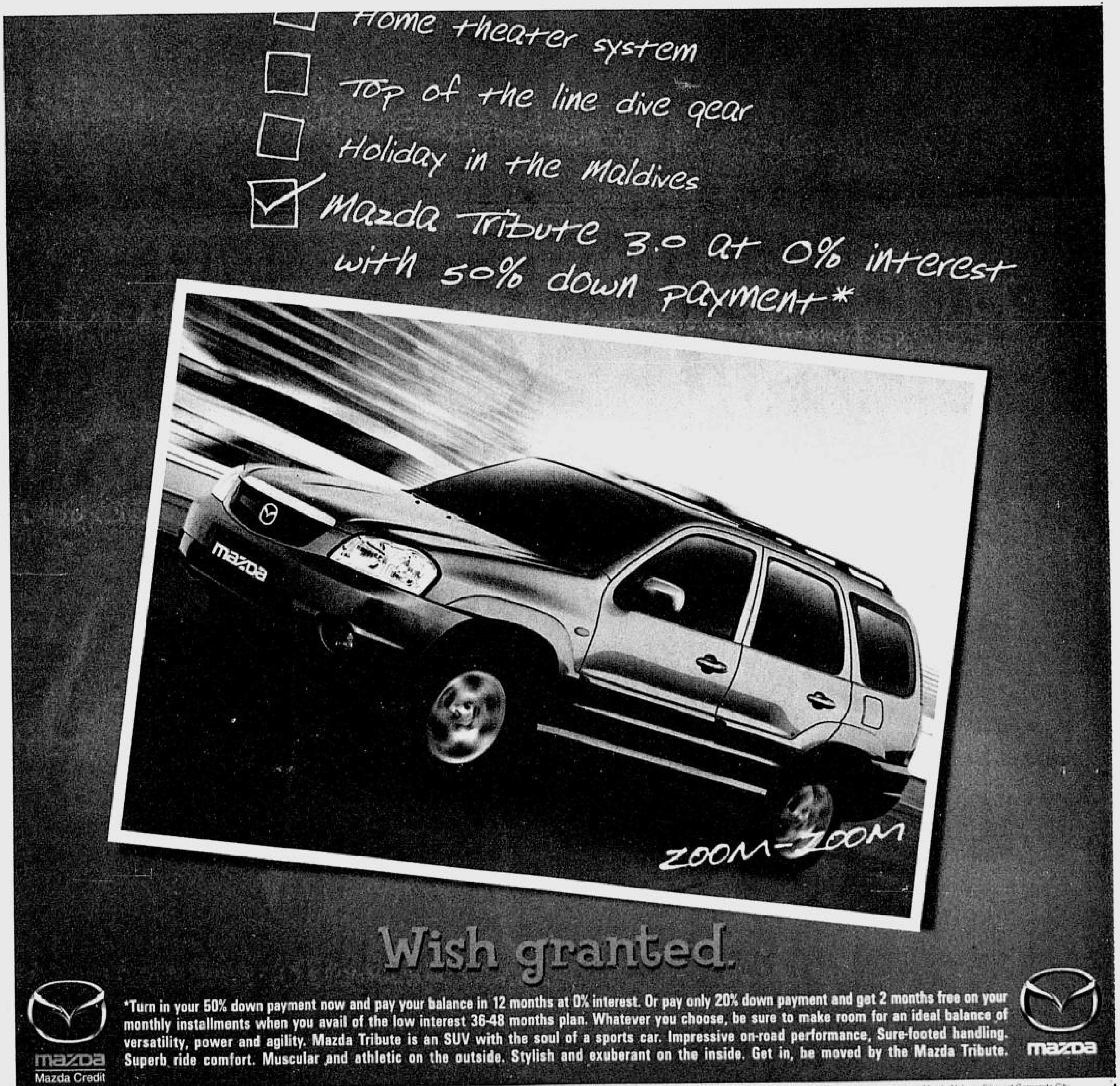
## WHAT'S INSIDE

Paintmasters brace up for busy holidays /A27



Heat nip Lakers /A28

West Bound wins at last, snares P1-million prize /A29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POC-PSC YEARENDER

# Winds of change blow hard in '04

By Marc Anthony Reyes

RAMIREZ

ATIENZA

PDI PHOTO

THE WINDS of change blew—hard—on Philippine sports this year.

Just when the country is bracing for a big sporting event in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, a changing of the guards happened in two vital sports agencies.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit decided not to seek a second term and gave way to equestrian chief Peping Cojuangco, who got 31 of 36 votes in the Nov. 26 polls for the POC presidency.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain, on the other hand, ended months of speculation by meeting the press and confirming reports on his appointment as the new Games and Amusements Board chair, which ended a three-year stint with the government's sports agency.

Commissioner Butch Ramirez has been named officer-in-charge in place of Buhain though names as to the official replacement keep cropping up by the day.

Among those being floated are Manila Sports Council chair and former Asian taekwondo champ Ali Atienza, Ateneo athletic director and 1991 SEAG organizing committee secretary general Junjun Capistrano and, of course, Ramirez.

Just before Christmas, the name of former PSC commissioner and Valderama, Antique, Mayor Rey Roquero entered the picture.

Roquero, also a former sportswriter, is reportedly the newest man being considered by Malacañang, which is giving premium to "harmonious relations" between the PSC and the POC.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has a point in making unity a priority because through their history, the POC and the PSC have been on opposite ends of many vital issues in the past.

Buhain and Dayrit were no exemptions and espoused contrasting views frequently.

Among them is the PSC's decision to cut the allowance of Class B and Class C athletes to streamline the 800-plus national roster, which according to Buhain does not encourage competitiveness.

The same issue was also used against Buhain by the athletes and coaches' unions as well as several national sports associations which held protest actions against the former swimming icon this year.

Prior to the elections, Dayrit, who is the president of the SEAG Federation, already distanced himself from the SEAG chores when he allowed Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee (Philsoc) chair Obet Pagdanganan to become the chief executive officer of the Games.

Pagdanganan wasted no time in appointing Cojuangco his vice chair, to aid the transition of power in the POC and the Philsoc as well.

Upon winning the election, Cojuangco promised to use his enormous political and business clout to help Philippine sports. He also formed a working committee composed of big-name NSA heads who plotted his candidacy.

Cojuangco was also reportedly being consulted in choosing the next PSC chair although there were several NSAs which floated the idea of installing him as the concurrent PSC chief.

His camp, though, immediately thumbed down the idea.

# Tulsa basketball coach resigns

TULSA, Okla.—Tulsa head basketball coach John Phillips announced his resignation Saturday. Phillips, however, will remain with the school after accepting an extended offer as assistant athletics director.

Tulsa athletic director Judy MacLeod announced that Alvin "Pooh" Williamson will take over on an interim basis for the rest of the 2004-05 campaign. Tulsa is 2-5 so far this season.

Phillips, who became Tulsa's 28th head basketball coach on April 9, 2001, had a successful tenure with the Golden Hurricane, both as an assistant coach and head coach. In three-plus seasons as head coach, Phillips compiled an overall record of 61-42 for a .592 winning percentage. Phillips ranks 10th on the career victories list.

*Reuters*

CREW from Skandia wave as they leave Sydney Harbor during the start of the race. AP

# *Big boats make waves at start of yacht race*

SYDNEY—Big boats Skandia, Konica Minolta and Nicorette shared the early lead in the 60th Sydney-Hobart yacht race on Sunday but the fleet of 115 boats was preparing for bad weather as it approaches Bass Strait.

The A$5-million ($3.8 million) Nicorette, untried since its launch two weeks ago, snatched the early lead but was soon joined by the bigger Skandia and Konica Minolta as the fleet headed out into the Tasman Sea in the annual 630-nautical mile race.

Super maxis Skandia and Konica Minolta, then known as Zana, engaged in an enthralling battle in last year's race, sailing within sight of each other before Australia's Skandia triumphed by just 14 minutes after more than two days at sea.

New Zealander Stewart Thwaites's Konica Minolta has been tipped to reverse that result over his Australian rival this year after a series of impressive warm-up races.

The leaders were desperately trying to cover as much distance as possible before two predicted southwesterly changes slam into the fleet somewhere near Bass Strait between the Australian mainland and the southern island state of Tasmania on Monday.

On Friday, Meteorologists warned sailors to expect gale-force winds averaging between 40 and 50 knots and with gusts of up to 60 knots as well as huge seas averaging between six and nine meters (17-29 feet).

*Reuters*

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TV GUIDE
Monday, December 27, 2004

| Channel | 2:30PM | 3:00PM | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | 5:30PM | 6:00PM | 6:30PM | 7:00PM | 7:30PM | 8:00PM | 8:30PM | 9:00PM | 9:30PM | 10:00PM | 10:30PM | 11:00PM | 11:30PM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABS-CBN 2 | | | | Showbiz No. 1 | Sandara's Romance | Get Backers | Ragnarok | Masked Rider Ryuki | TV Patrol | Spirits | Krystala | Lovers In Paris | Hiram | Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest | OK Fine! Whatever | | | Insider | The Correspondents |
| NBN | Value Vision | | | | Teledyaryo | Value Vision | Next Stop | | | Network Forum | | Teledyaryo | | Muscom Cup 2003 | | | | Dial M | |
| ABC 5 | | | Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko | Art Is-Kool | Anime Ring Kaisho | | | | Sentro | Friends | The Apprentice | | Fear Factor | | Big News | Pops! | | Extreme Island | Billboard On-Air |
| GMA 7 | Leya (2:45 PM) | Joyride (3:15 PM) | Snow Angel (3:45 PM) | | One Piece | Witch Hunter Robin | Slam Dunk | 24 Oras | | Extra Challenge | | Mulawin | Starstruck (8:45 PM) | Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM)<br>Lagot Ka Isusumbong Kita | | | Sakal | | |
| RPN 9 | Metro TV Shopping | | | Hey Arnold! | As Told By Ginger | Wild Thornberries | Sponge Bob | Entertainment Tonight | Wrestling | | NBA On RPN | | | | | Newswatch Now | Sex & the City | Wild TV | Hopeline |
| IBC 13 | | V League | | | | IBC Express Balita | | Global Family Series | | Retro TV | | Legacy Of Hero | | Retro TV | Global Family Series | | IBC News Tonite | Linawin Natin | |
| Solar | | Wow | | Slambal | | Restol | Zeta Project | Mucha Lucha! | Spiderman | Deep Space Nine | | Witchblade | | Twilight Zone | | Shadows In The Storm | | | |
| Nickelodeon | Dora, The Explorer | Little Bear | Blues Clues | SpongeBob SquarePants | All That | Are You Afraid of the Dark? | 100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd | The Amanda Show | The Brother's Garcia | Fairly Odd Parents | SpongeBob SquarePants | As Told By Ginger | Are You Afraid of the Dark? | All That | 100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd | The Amanda Show | Rocket Power | The Wild Thornberrys | The Brother's Garcia |
| MYX | | Urban MYX | Rock MYX | Pop MYX | OPM MYX | Take 5 | My MYX | MYX Daily Top Ten | | Mellow MYX | Rock MYX | Pop MYX | Urban MYX | OPM MYX Countdown | | My MYX | MYX Backtrax | OPM MYX | Mellow MYX |
| ETC | | The O.C. | | Saturday Night Live | | Starting Over | | NBC Nightly News | Entertainment Tonight | Will & Grace | JKX | Meet My Folks | | Queer Eye For A Straight Guy | | Dateline | | Nip/Tuck | |
| Cinema One | | Nang Iniwan Mo Ako | | | | Bakit Labis Kitang Mahal? | | | | Super B | | | | Insiang | | | | The Grudge 2 | |
| Studio 23 | Bewitched | Urban MYX | Rock MYX | Pop MYX | OPM MYX | Take 5 | My MYX | Batman Animated Series | Samurai Deeper Kyo | Wazzup Wazzup | World's Craziest Video | Jake 2.0 | | Charmed | | News Central | The West Wing | | Travel Time |
| AXN | | 24 | | 24 | | The Right Stuff II | Rated X | Gensomaden Saiyuki | Gensomaden Saiyuki | 7 Days | | Fear Factor | | The Shield | | 24 | | 24 | |
| Star World | When Hidden Cameras Attack | The Bold & The Beautiful | | Hollywood Squares | Home Improvement | Ally McBeal | | The Simpsons | The Drew Carey Show | Star News Asia | Friends | That 70s Show | Everybody Loves Raymond | Grounded For Life | Becker | Breaking The Magician's Code | | Friends | That 70s Show |
| CNN | | | | Business International | | Larry King Live | | World News | World Sport | Business International | | World News Asia | | World News | Living Golf | World News Asia | | World News | World Sport |
| National Geographic | On Assignment | Killer Instinct | Totally Wild | Be The Creature | | Planet Wild | Wildlife Detectives | The Snake Wranglers | Croc Chronicles With Dr Brady Barr | Wild | | About Asia | | National Geographic Specials | | Killer Instincts/ Totally Wild | Totally Wild | Be The Creature | |
| Solar Sports | | In This Corner | | Danish Open '04 Final Matches | | Fight Sports Greatest Classics | | | | Sagupaan | | NBA Jam L907 | NBA Action | NBA Boston vs. Sn Antonio | | | | | Vintage NBA: Red Auerbach |
| Lifestyle Network | Country Style | Interiors By Design | Decorating With Style | Decorating Cents | Moto Mario | Sweet Dreams | 30 Minute Meals | Bill Boggs Corner | Unwrapped | Food 911 | E! True Hollywood Story | | Behind The Velvet Ropes | Area | | Breathing Room | Genuine Article | Planet Parent | 30 Minute Meals |
| HBO | | | Into the Night | | | | Getting There | | | Tears Of The Sun | | | | Red Water | | | Doc Hollywood | | |
| Star Movies | | | | Shark Zone | | | Rushmore | | | Psycho (7:15 PM) | | | | We Were Soldiers | | | | Manners (11:15PM) | |
| Cartoon Network | Scooby-Doo Show | The All New Popeye Show | | Tom & Jerry Show | Baby Looney Tunes | TBA | | | | | Yu-Gi-Oh! | Gundam Seed | The Looney Tunes Show | Courage The Cowardly Dog | The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy | The Addams Family | The Funky Phantom | Boomerang - Boomeraction | Yu-Gi-Oh! |
| ESPN | | | | NFL Football - Browns vs Dolphins | | | | | | Eng. Premier League Highlights 04/05 | | Sportscenter Taiwan | Table Tennis '04 Invitational C'ships | Sportscenter Taiwan | Premier Snooker League '04 Cmry Durham,UK | | | | Sportscenter Taiwan |
| Disney Channel | Kim Possible | Totally Spies | Lizzie Mcguire | Even Stevens | That's So Raven | Martin Mystery | Totally Spies | The Legend Of Tarzan | Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny | America's Funniest Home Video | Wonderful World Of Disney | | | My Wife And Kids | That's So Raven | According To Jim | America's Funniest Home Video | Wonderful World Of Disney | |
| Cinemax | | Chameleon | | | | Nuts | | | | The Assignment | | | | City By The Sea | | | Cobra (10:45PM) | | |
| Hallmark Channel | Mad About You | Fallen Angel | | | | Play With Me Sesame | Sesame Street | | Bewitched | Mysterious Ways | | The District | | Picking Up & Dropping Off | | | Judging Amy (10:35PM) | | Mysterious Ways |
| Discovery Channel | | Monster Garage | | Mythbusters | | Wild Discovery | | Ultimate Discovery | | Unsolved History | | | | Wild Discovery | | Best Of Discovery | | | |
| MTV Philippines | | MTV Lokal | | Non-Stop Hits | | Non-Stop Hits | 05 MAA Nominee Specials | MTV Get Spotted | MTV Loveline | MTV U-Break | Moto Love Music Angel Baby | MTV Brand New | MTV Fashionista | TRL | | Cribs | Spring Break | VH1 Hits/ Video Collection | |
| Sports Plus | | | | Porsche md 11&12 | Rookie Manual | Ford 400 Homestead Highlight Prgrm | | Superbowl5 Colts vs Cowboys | | ADT Golf Skills Chall. Day2 | | | | NFL Delayed Telecast | | | | | |
| EWTN | St. Matthew | Angelus (3:15 PM) | Benediction And Devotion | Story Keepers | Image Of God | The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery | Light Of The East II | Voices On Virtue | EWTN Gallery | Threshold Of Hope Encore | | Sunday Night Live With Fr. Groeschel | | Daily Mass | | Angelus (10:15PM) | G.K. Chesterton | Catholic Compass | |

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# Paintmasters brace up for busy holidays

MARVIN Ortiguerra of Welcoat grabs the ball against Rey Mendoza of Addict Mobile in a recent PBL encounter. RUDY ESPERAS

By Jasmine W. Payo

**THERE'S no excuse for a strong team like Welcoat Paints to be struggling in the PBL Open Championship.**

Often favored to rule the tournament, last conference's finalist has been going through a tough elimination round. While winning used to come easy, the Paint Masters can't even post two straight wins lately.

"I've been asking for consistency," said coach Caloy Garcia, whose Welcoat has won five championships in nine finals appearances. "It's what we lack and we really need a streak right now."

Garcia senses the urgency and noted that they've been spending the holidays rethinking the team's strategy. "We have three weeks during the Christmas break to work on our game," he noted.

The youthful coach is also well aware of the adjustments they have to make. "We have the strength in offense but my concern is we relax on defense," said Garcia. "We also need to pass the ball more so we can go after a scattered and more balanced scoring."

Indeed, Welcoat now finds itself in an unusual position. Unlike past conferences, the team has become one of the darkhorse candidates for the remaining outright berth in the semifinals, an incentive for the top two teams after the elimination round.

Their fate is an apparent contrast with fellow finalist Magnolia-FEU Wizards, who clinched the first automatic slot in the semifinals. The defending champions, who also own the tournament's longest winning streak at seven, holds a league-best 9-3 record.

The Montaña Jewels, who are enjoying a breakout conference, remained in striking distance with an 8-2 slate.

Welcoat and Granny Goose, though tied for third place, are a couple of games behind at 6-5.

But Garcia seems unfazed. He noted that the Paint Masters' remaining game schedules could boost their semifinal bid.

"We're done with all the top teams and all we have to do now is to beat the lower (ranked) teams," said Garcia.

Garcia added that ending the year with a victory--a 75-65 triumph over Granny Goose--will be another advantage for the Paint Masters.

"We'll be prepared in our next games," he said. "The team will have a high morale."

## SPORTSWATCH

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### Davao City tops Blaze Shoot-out

DAVAO CITY—Team Networx-ERE Racing recorded one of the most blazing performances here when driver Marvin Suzara, aboard his 1989 EF Honda, captured the Quick 8 crown in the 2004 Petron Blaze Shoot-out Speed City Christmas Bracket races at the Speed City track of the Riverfront Business Park in Bacaca. Suzara clocked Davao City's best time of 11.7 seconds, which was just short of his record time of 11.248 seconds in the final leg of the 2004 Philippine Drag Racing Federation series that culminated in Pasay City. ERE racing president Ricky de Leon and Networx Detailing team owners Stephen Santiago and Dong Arcilla were elated over the successful partnership that made Davao City the overall champion in this Davao-Cebu shoot-out. "This only proved the powerful combination of Networx Detailing and ERE Racing, said Arcilla. "We look forward to more success in the next drag racing season." Suzara romped past Cebu driver Joel Retuya of Kartzone EuroStar Cebu City Ground Image.whose Mazda RX-7 recorded a best time of 12.329 seconds. Networx Auto Detailing-Manila is at 1 Manhattan St., Cubao, QC, (7218007). Call its Davao branch on F. Bangoy Street, corner 6th Ave., Agdao, Davao City, at (082) 3007711 and 3007722.

### Roligon derby eliminations today

THE MUCH-AWAITED P1 million Noche Buena 5-Cock Derby finally gets under way today with the 2-cock qualifying round kicking off hostilities at 4 p.m. Hosted by Rolly Ligon and sponsored by Thunderbird Power Feeds, the 3-cock finals will be held on Wednesday. A P1 million guaranteed cash prize is at stake for an entry fee of P7,700. The minimum bet is P4,400. Two-pointers tonight share the P100,000 champion's prize for the day. Entries include Benjie Lim, Alex & Pol Derpo, Mangzee Farm, Alex Wallcott, Dong Lacson, Roger Lahaylahay, Erwin Diamante, William Go, Allan Siaco, James Uy, Rey Briones, Benny Lado, Charie Cristobal, Dado Mitra, Boy Marzo, Peter Uren, Abraham Bernales and Nelson Uy.

**CHAIRMAN'S CUP WINNERS:** Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club chair Robert John Sobrepeña (middle) congratulates Rhais Gamboa (right) and amateur standout Hanson So Jr., overall net and gross champions, respectively, in the recent Chairman's Cup tournament. Also in photo are Southwoods's sports and games committee chair Freddie Mendoza and Shean Bedi.

# Emperado leads active chess tourney

EMMANUEL "Buknoy" Emperado of Parañaque City scored his second straight win at the expense of Jan Emmanuel Garcia of Manila after 50 moves of an English Opening to remain on top in the Metropolitan Chess Club (MCC) unrated active chess tournament yesterday at the club's headquarters at the 4F of J & F Divino Bldg. #967 Aurora Blvd. in Quezon City.

Emperado, ninth placer in the 2002 World Open Chess tournament expert division in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, earlier defeated Alex Vitualla of Quezon City via 40 moves of a Ruy Lopez Opening in the first round.

The 17-year-old Emmanuel, youngest son of MCC founding chair/president and former Olympian WNM Milagros "Mila" Emperado, has 2.0 points, the same output of Stephen Manzanero, Larry Ballesteros, Ronald Nonles, Jesus Belleza, Khan Dilinogun, Benito Ong, Ryan Dungca, Danilo Silva, Haridas Pascua and Victoriano Escora. Jun Rivera leads those with 1.5 points. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

## Tanauan chessfest March 4

THE 1ST Tanauan Chess Open-Mayor's Cup, the country's richest active chess tournament ever, will be held on March 4-5, 2005 at the Speaker Jose B. Laurel Memorial Gymnasium in Tanauan City.

The two-day tournament offers cash prizes to the top 20 finishers with the champion receiving P100,000 plus trophy.

Made possible by the First Asia Institute and the city government of Tanauan, the event is being organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia.

"This collaboration between First Asia Institute and the Acca will put Tanauan City in the forefront of chess action in the country," said Joey La'O, vice president of the First Asia Institute.

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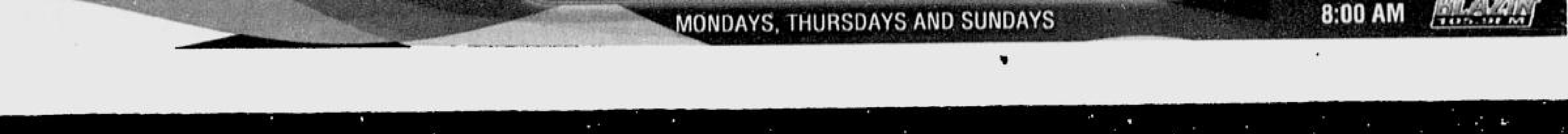
DEPARTMENT STORES: RUSTAN'S (ALABANG TOWN CENTER, CUBAO, HARRISON PLAZA, MAKATI, SHANGRI-LA) • ROBINSONS (FESTIVAL SUPERMALL, METRO BACOLOD, ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA, PIONEER) • SM (CAGAYAN DE ORO, CEBU, DAVAO, ILOILO, MAKATI) • THE LANDMARK • METRO GAISANO, MARKET MARKET • CINDERELLA, MEGAMALL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DEC.30 HOUSTON @ CLEVELAND 7:30 PM
JAN. 2 MEMPHIS @ MINNESOTA 10:00 AM
MONDAYS, THURSDAYS AND SUNDAYS
NBA RADIO
BOSTON CELTICS VS SPURS
8:00 AM
BLAZIN' 105.9 FM

# O'Neal, Bryant live up to hype

LOS ANGELES—Seldom has an NBA regular-season game drawn the attention of Saturday's Heat-Lakers matchup.

And when it was over, most agreed that Shaq-Kobe I had lived up to expectations.

"As soon as I came out, I realized how big the game was. I wish all the games were like that," said Lamar Odom, who equaled a season high with 24 points in the Lakers' 104-102 overtime loss. "It was real big—it was fun."

Odom was traded to the Lakers in July with Caron Butler and Brian Grant for Shaquille O'Neal, who was playing against his former team for the first time since one of the biggest transactions in NBA history.

Miami coach Stan Van Gundy had a different take after his team equaled a franchise record with its 11th straight victory.

## Relationship show

"There was no hype concerning the game at all. The hype was Shaq and Kobe," he said. "It was like a relationship show. It was ridiculous, in my opinion.

"I'm old-fashioned, really, I only care about the game. You would have thought it was J-Lo and Ben Affleck breaking up."

O'Neal and Kobe Bryant led the Lakers to three consecutive championships from 2000-02 and a berth in the NBA Finals last June despite their well-documented acrimonious relationship.

O'Neal purposely avoided saying Bryant's name afterward—as has been the case for months.

When asked if he had buried the hatchet with the Lakers' star, O'Neal replied: "I don't have a hatchet. We just wanted to come in here and win."

When asked what he missed the most about Los Angeles, O'Neal said: "The police officers, the people, the kids in the hood, the Fox Hills mall, the Beverly Center, all of the superstars. I miss the atmosphere, I don't miss the traffic and I don't miss two or three people."

## Out of memory

When asked who those people are, O'Neal said: "I don't know, I don't know their names. Their names have been erased out of my memory. If I try to go back, I'll get shocked."

O'Neal said he didn't talk to Bryant after the game. The two acknowledged each other right before the game began.

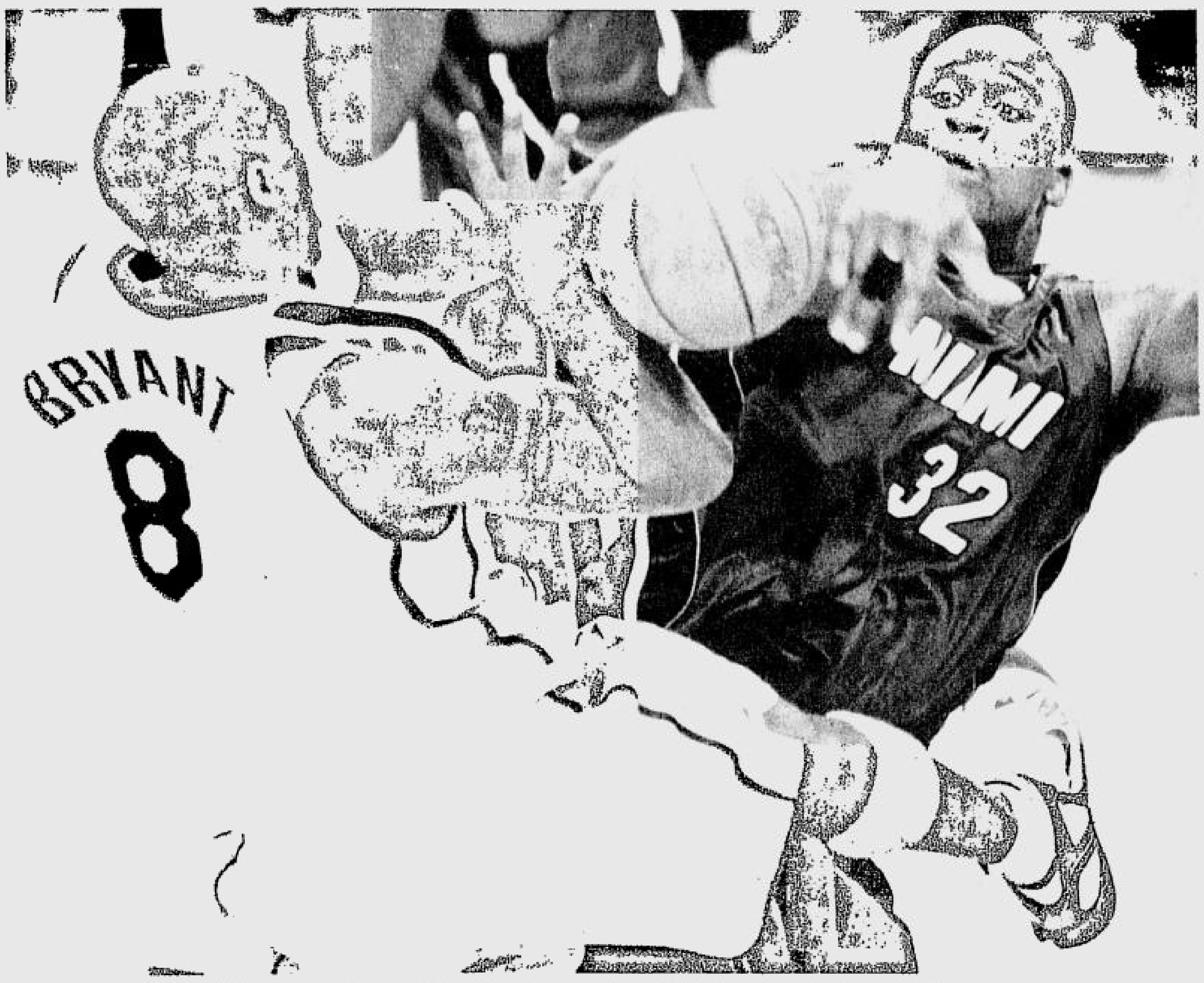
O'Neal said he didn't watch a pregame tribute to him on the videoboard at Staples Center.

But he listened to the crowd reaction.

"I think it was 89.2 percent cheers and 11.8 percent boos," he said, failing to add correctly. "But I'm used to it. It was a fun day. I'm sure the NBA made a lot of money today."

The visiting locker room was jammed with reporters before the game. O'Neal seemed amused, and avoided the crowd by hanging out near the shower room sorting through tickets.

Among the celebrities attending the game were Sylvester Stallone, Nicole Kidman, Dustin Hoffman, Dyan Cannon, Penny Marshall, Henry Winkler, Sugar Ray Leonard, Renee Zellweger, Samuel L. Jackson, Lionel Richie and Courtney Cox. *AP*



**SHAQUILLE O'Neal** (right) strips Kobe Bryant of the ball and collects his sixth foul of the game in the second half. REUTERS

# Shaq gets what he wants as Heat nip Lakers in OT

LOS ANGELES— Shaquille O'Neal got just what he wanted for Christmas as his Miami Heat edged the Los Angeles Lakers, 104-102, in overtime Saturday in O'Neal's first clash with his former team—and in particular his former teammate, Kobe Bryant.

The National Basketball Association game that had been anticipated like a visit from Santa provided Miami with their 11th straight victory, matching a club record set in January-February 1997.

Bryant scored a season-high 42 points, but couldn't connect on a potential game-winning 3-pointer at the buzzer in overtime.

"It was a fun game," said Bryant, whose team are now a lackluster 14-12 as O'Neal's Heat improved the Eastern Conference's best record to 22-7. "We gave ourselves a chance to win it down the stretch. We just wanted to come in and keep our streak going," said O'Neal, insisting that tension between himself and Bryant wasn't a factor.

But the pre-game spotlight was firmly on Bryant's testy relationship with O'Neal. The two were often at odds even as they earned three NBA titles together, and soon after the Lakers lost to Detroit in last June's NBA Finals, O'Neal demanded a trade.

Nine-time NBA champion coach Phil Jackson said he didn't want to return if Bryant was on the team, but owner Jerry Buss stuck with Bryant. Jackson departed and O'Neal was traded to Miami in July.

"It just felt like another game," insisted Bryant, who made the gesture of walking a couple of strides to greet O'Neal as the teams took the floor for the tip-off—after a short video tribute to O'Neal that drew loud cheers.

It was a cursory move at best, but both players insisted the no eye-contact brush that passed for a hello was standard procedure.

"I was just doing the same thing I always do. I didn't want to get caught up in all this nonsense," said O'Neal, who nonetheless listed "the traffic" and "two or three people" among the things he doesn't miss from his eight years in Los Angeles.

Bryant wasted no time in challenging O'Neal, driving into the lane on the first possession only to have his ex-teammate block the shot.

Bryant made four of his five 3-pointers in a 15-point first quarter, and he took his total to 42 with two freethrows after O'Neal had fouled out with 2:15 left in regulation—when he bumped Bryant on a drive down the lane.

That gave the Lakers a 93-91 lead, but Bryant didn't score again in the game.

"I felt I let my team down a little bit, fouling out," O'Neal said. "I was just trying to protect the basket. All day long I was saying to myself, 'No lay-ups, and no dunks.' I kind of forgot at that point that I had five (fouls)." While O'Neal insisted that he came into the game with no especially hard feelings, he admitted the "no lay-ups and no dunks" mantra applied "basically to everybody, but especially to him (Bryant)." *AFP*

**PACER'S** Jermaine O'Neal (7) blocks Pistons' Ben Wallace. AP

### 1ST TIFF SINCE BRAWL

# Pistons hand Pacers Xmas loss

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana—The return of Jermaine O'Neal to the Pacers lineup wasn't enough to prevent a Christmas day defeat on Saturday as the Pistons triumphed, 98-93, in the first meeting between the teams whose last clash ended in an ugly brawl in Detroit.

Rasheed Wallace scored half of his 16 points in the fourth quarter, including a 3-pointer that put the Pistons ahead, 89-80, with a minute and a half left to play.

"We had a lot of guys play well," Pistons coach Larry Brown said. "Our bench was really solid, though we didn't shoot that well. I'm just glad we won. I'm glad it's over. Now we can all go enjoy our Christmas and be with our families." Wallace and Richard Hamilton, who scored 25 points to lead four Pistons in double figures, upstaged the return of O'Neal, who was cleared to play earlier this week after an arbitrator reduced his 25-game suspension by 10 games in a move the National Basketball Association has protested in court.

O'Neal's sanction was one of the landmark punishments meted out by NBA commissioner David Stern after the Nov. 19 melee that erupted near the end of the Pacers' 97-82 victory over the Pistons.

Ron Artest, Stephen Jackson and O'Neal all landed blows on unruly Pistons fans in the incident, which started when a fan threw a liquid-filled cup at Artest.

Stern banished Ron Artest for the last 72 games of the season and suspended Stephen Jackson for 30 games—punishments upheld by the arbitrator.

Five players and five spectators face assault charges in the incident.

Lest the memory of the ugly scenes sour the holiday mood, security was heightened with 30 additional security guards and tethered courtside chairs. Another contributing factor to last month's brawl was eliminated as alcohol sales are banned in Conseco Fieldhouse on Christmas.

Fans made their presence felt with loud ovations for O'Neal and Reggie Miller as well as boos for the Pistons. "I love this state, it has great basketball fans," O'Neal said. *AFP*

# Broncos rout Titans, keep AFC hope alive

NEW YORK—Jake Plummer threw a pair of touchdown passes and Reuben Droughns ran for two others as the Denver Broncos crushed the Tennessee Titans, 37-16, on Saturday, keeping alive their bid for an AFC wild-card berth.

Having lost two of their last three games and with playoff hopes fading, the Broncos (9-6) arrived in Nashville needing a win over the slumping Titans (4-11) and produced one of their best efforts of the season giving Mike Shanahan his 100th victory as Broncos coach.

Plummer, who had come under heavy criticism for throwing nine interceptions and just two touchdown passes in his last four games, responded by completing 21 of 26 passes for 303 yards, including a 23-yard TD strike to Droughns to open the scoring and another Rod Smith.

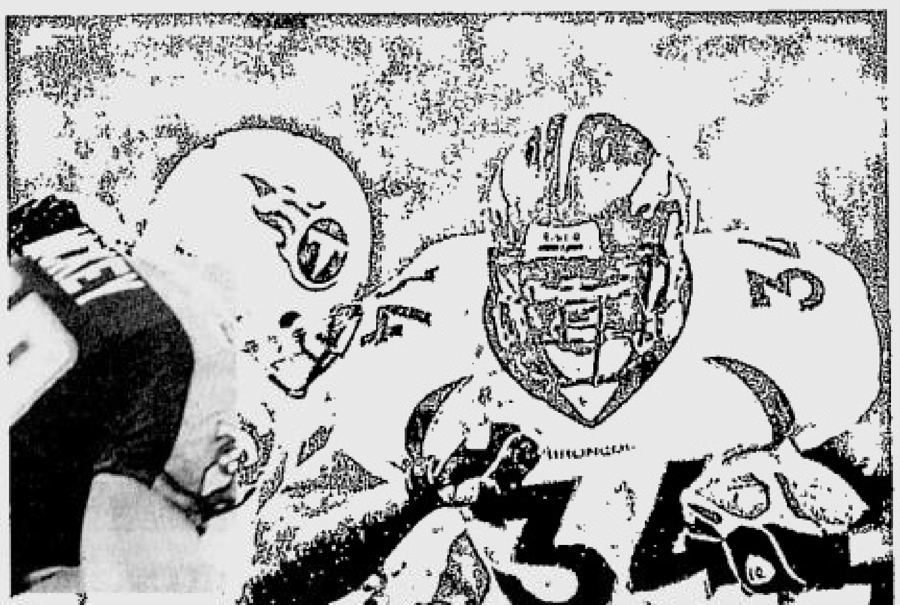
Droughns, who nearly missed the game with a pinched nerve, also had touchdown runs of eight and 23 yards to finish the night with 91 yards on 22 carries.

A punishing Bronco defense also made major contributions cooling of the NFL's hottest quarterback Titans Billy Volek, who had thrown for 922 yards in his last two games.

Filling in for injured Steve McNair, Volek never got untracked against the Broncos completing just 8 of 20 attempts for 111 yards and two interceptions before being knocked out with a knee injury in the fourth quarter.

In Kansas City, Lawrence Tynes, the only Scottish born player in the NFL, booted a clutch 38-yard field goal with 22 seconds remaining to lift the Chiefs to a 31-30 win over the Oakland Raiders.

Tynes' first career game winner earned the Chiefs their fourth consecutive victory improving their record to 7-8. Sebastian Janikowski booted a 46-yard field goal with 67 seconds left to put Oakland ahead, 30-28.



**REUBEN** Droughns (right) of the Denver Broncos runs with the ball as Donnie Nickey of the Tennessee Titans goes for a tackle during their Dec. 25 game. AFP

# Royals bring back pitcher Jose Lima

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—The Kansas City Royals brought back starting pitcher Jose Lima on Christmas Day, as the two sides agreed to a one-year contract.

The 32-year-old Lima played last season in Los Angeles and finished 13-5 with a 4.07 earned run average, but is now back with the club with which he won eight games in 2003.

Through parts of 11 major league seasons with the Tigers, Astros, Royals and Dodgers, Lima holds a career mark of 84-82 with a 5.00 ERA. His best season came in 1999, when he went 21-10 with a 3.58 earned run average while with Houston. *The Sports Network, Reuters*

## CLASSIC OPEN

# West Bound wins at last, snares ₱1-million prize

By Edwin Villanueva, *Contributor*

WEST Bound is "heartbreak kid" no more.

Running as if there's no more tomorrow, West Bound unleashed a torrid stretch rally to prevail in the 2004 Philracom Classic Open Championship yesterday, finally snapping a series of heartbreaking losses in major races.

The 4-year-old Heza Gone West-Fair Maiden progeny swept home to a four-length victory over defending titlist Red Star Rising who also came alive with a similar powerful run down the wire.

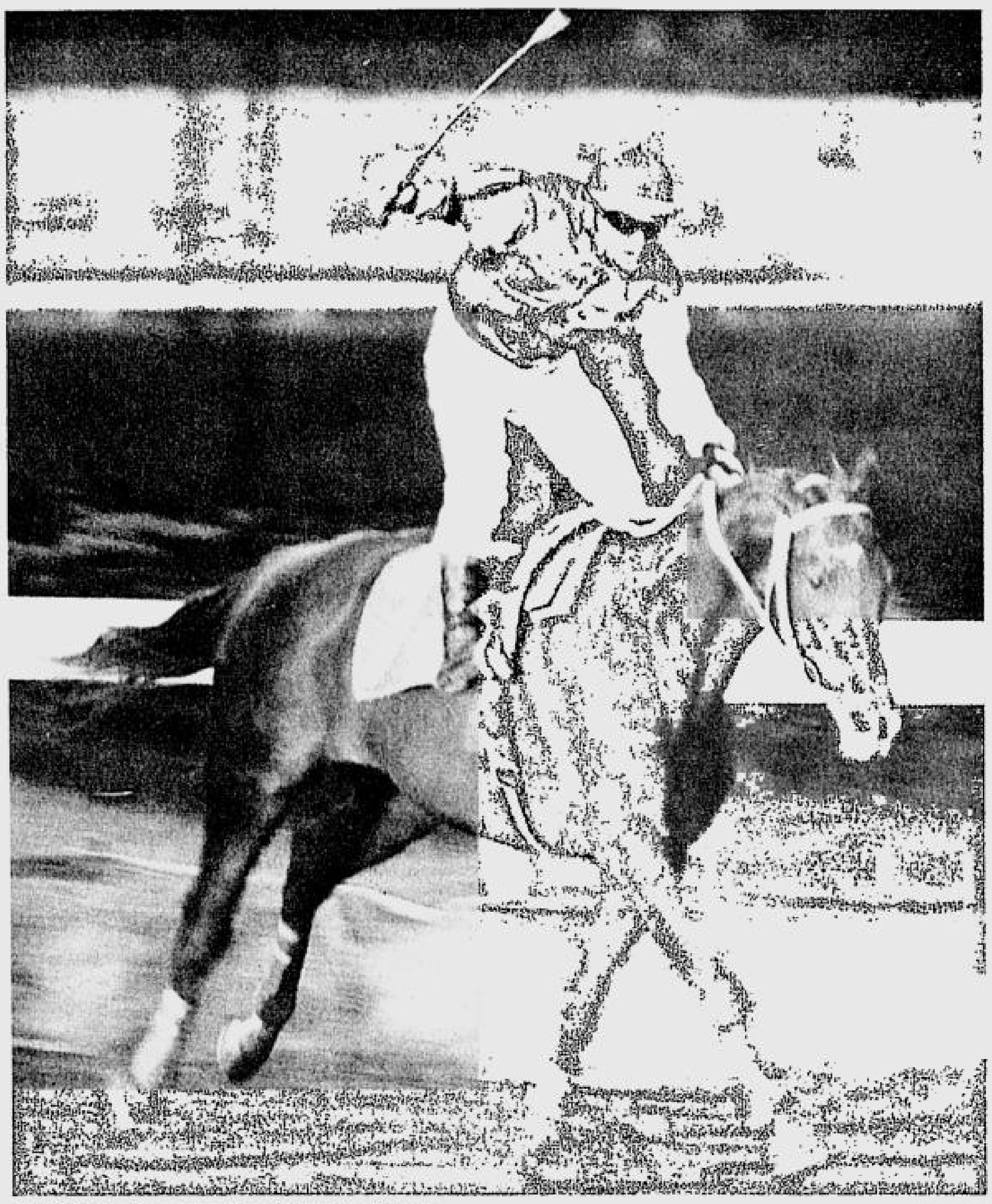
"*Sa wakas nadale rin. May pamasko na may pambagong taon pa ako* (At last we made it. This is a Christmas and New Year's gift for me)," said jubilant rider Eldy Salvador after West Bound nailed down the victory worth P1 million for the C&H Enterprises.

The second choice in the betting, West Bound barged out 13th and last among the contenders, with Red Star Rising just a length in front of him while Don Paolo sashayed to the lead, staying there gallantly up to the home turn.

As Don Paolo shook off Being There and Suonos at the front end, top favorite Sexiest tried to close in on the leaders but was stymied by traffic rounding the final bend as West Bound and Red Star Rising dug in to join the fray.

Salvador muscled West Bound four-wide when they bounded off the last bend and the chestnut colt briskly kicked away as if saying "excuse me" to his rivals to finally put away the 2,050-meter contest in impressive style.

"*Ang tulis ng remate nya kaya buong dumating. Nakabawi na kay* Red Star Rising (He rallied sharply that's why he came in with a lot in reserve. At last, he got back at Red Star Rising)," added Salvador, who jubilantly waved his whip as West Bound crossed the wire to the defeaning cheers of the jampacked crowd at the Santa Ana Park.



ELDY Salvador coaxes West Bound to victory.

JESS YUSON

West Bound was dubbed the "heartbreak kid" after failing to sweep the 2003 Triple Crown. That same year, he lost the Presidential Gold Cup by a nose to Red Star Rising, who also pipped him in the Classic Open. Only on Dec. 12, West Bound lost by a nose to Empire King in the PGC.

Also this year, West Bound was only fourth in the La Mirada Mile, fifth in the Legend Cup and sixth in the SMB Marho Breeders' Cup Classic.

"The weight (59 kilos) probably bothered him. But he still ran a good race and Dhunoy Raquel had a good ride," said former racing commissioner Francis Trillana, who co-owns Red Star Rising with son Michael. Red Star Rising got P376,750.

Cover Girl, West Bound's coupled entry, captured third spot for P209,250, then came Stowaway Lass, Don Paolo, Neat Laurel, Sexiest, Lyonnais, American Woman, Real Slew, Being There, Crystal Show and Suonos.

West Bound, now with 12 wins in 23 starts, clocked 2:13 flat (28-24-26-26-29).

Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag, commissioners Eddie Jose, Eduardo Domingo Jr., Vergel Cruz and Rogelio Tandiama, along with PRCI's Ramon Ereñeta, awarded the prizes.

# Japanese horse gets slice of race history

TOKYO—Favorite Zenno Rob Roy created a slice of history on Sunday, becoming only the second horse to win the Emperor's Cup, Japan Cup and Arima Kinen in the same year.

Jockey Olivier Peslier won a record third successive title in the Arima Kinen, the grand finale of Japanese thoroughbred racing, as Zenno Rob Roy edged out Tap Dance City in a tight finish.

The Frenchman won the last two Arima Kinen races with Symboli Kris S.

Zenno Rob Roy won the 2,500-meter race at Funabashi's Nakayama Racecourse in a record time of two minutes 29.5 seconds.

"This feels fantastic," said Peslier, a triple Arc de Triomphe winner from 1996 to 1998. "Rob Roy was so strong and refused to let Tap (Dance City) run away with it." Silk Famous finished third behind Tap Dance City in the 15-horse field. Kikka-sho winner Delta Blues was fifth.

Japan's all-time money leader T.M. Opera is the only other horse to win the Emperor's Cup, Japan Cup and Arima Kinen in one season.

The four-year-old Zenno Rob Roy won the top prize of $1.7 million, plus an additional bonus of $1.9 million from the Japan Racing Association for winning the treble. *Reuters*

# US, Canada bets prevail

GRAND FORKS, North Dakota — Dan Fritsche scored twice—including a tiebreaking short-handed goal—to lead the defending champion United States team to a 5-4 victory over Russia on Saturday night in the opener of the World Jr. Hockey Championship.

In other opening-round games Saturday, Canada beat Slovakia, 7-3, the Czech Republic downed Belarus, 7-2, and Finland got past Germany, 4-1.

Fritsche's second goal, scored midway through the second period, was the winner. The Americans took leads of 2-0, 3-2 and 4-3 against Russia, the tournament champion in 2002 and 2003. Robbie Schremp, Chris Bourque and Drew Stafford had the other goals for the US. *AP*

# PSA fetes Pagulayan, Rivero and Figueroa

From page A25

"I told myself to just let go and trust the One above," a teary-eyed Figueroa had said after the stunning win. "I did not expect to win. All I wanted was to improve on my record (152). If I did that, it was OK for me."

The 19-year-old almost repeated the trick in the round of 32—the first ever Filipina to make it that far in the Olympics—but lost a heartbreaker to World University Games silver medalist Almudena Gallardo of Spain, 150-152.

Nonetheless, she established herself as the best Filipino archer to ever compete in the Summer Games following her 27th place finish in Athens, eclipsing the previous best of 37th achieved by Francisco Naranjilla Jr. in the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Like Pagulayan, Rivero also battled a hometown crowd cheering on Greek heroine Elisavet Mystakidou in the semifinals of taekwondo's under-67 division.

Unmindful of the bumps and bruises, the 16-year old lass gave her all and came close to securing at least a silver medal, only to lose to the Greek by the slimmest of margins, 2-3.

"It hurts. I know I could have won," said Rivero. She fought a good fight in the consolation round, but couldn't carry on and bowed out of contention with a 2-6 defeat at the hands of Korean Sun Hwang Kyung.

"She may not have won a medal, but certainly she won the hearts of many who saw her perform," said former Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Celso Dayrit of Rivero's fearless stance.

# Checking out

## BARE EYE

*Recah Trinidad*

CIVIC worker Nandy Charvet of Mandaluyong City sent a box of notebooks, then quickly followed this up with another box of nice school bags.

The gifts should come in handy for the June time school opening. But they form part of a bundle of holiday goodies for over 50 farm kids.

For the fourth year in a row, friends will gather and chip in to bring a bit of joy to children living around a simple, tree-lined rest house in Pangao, Lipa City today.

Dr. Ruel Reyes of the ATR Wines and Spirits, local distributors of the world-famous Torres brandy, will motor from San Pablo City bearing his own gift bags for each of the children from farm families in the area.

This is the fourth year in a row since Olympian Narciso Bernardo, who has survived a stroke, helped start the gift-giving drive for children in that cool, rustic Batangas nook a good 10-minute ride from the Lipa City Cathedral.

***

Today's affair takes extra significance in that it would give those involved in the annual gift-giving, like true-blue Batangueños Gerry Mayor, Mar Maralit and Danny Silva, a chance for a close look at the health of children whose health had been gravely affected by the choking stench from a big piggery in Purok 4 in Pangao.

The noxious emission in the area had been contained with the help of Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos who also ordered a close monitoring of the piggery starting last February.

Concerned families in the area were one in saying that Mayor Vi's efforts were the greatest gifts that came the way of the poor farm kids.

The concerned group involved in today's gift-giving had called the attention of Mayor Vi after discovering the poor health of kids, who suffered mainly from respiratory ailments due to daily exposure to the stinking poisonous fumes from the piggery.

Today's gift-giving affair in Pangao is a critical break from the tired holiday ritual.

A personal check on the health of these affected children is also meant to tell the government that true concern does not end with publicized prayers and noisy gift-giving.

Caring should resume long after pictures of Malacañang officials, taken together with the poor calamity victims, had seen print in newspapers.

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It's that time of the year and, as in the past, the country's sportswriters have again joined hands to honor the year's top performers in sports.

Golfer Jennifer Rosales and boxer Manny Pacquiao have been named top awardees, not necessarily in that order.

Let's put it straight. On any good sporting year, both Rosales and Pacquiao would've not made it as the country's top athletes.

OK. There was a taunt Pacquiao should've made it solo top athlete, hands-down.

Yes. But only if the Philippine Sportswriters Association, which hands out the awards, has run a popularity contest.

Based on true merit, iconic Pacquiao should've not been named to the top.

The best he had done was earn a controversial split-draw against IBF/WBA featherweight king Juan Manuel Marquez in Las Vegas where the Mexican, after suffering three knockdowns, had shown the world he was the better boxer.

Pacquiao's four-round annihilation of Fahsan 3K Battery was, at best, a forgettable picnic.

In fact, that feast had Pacquiao burping after he started to run out of breath by the third round.

The famous kid with the killer fists could've put up a more interesting show if he had done his thing on the pool table.

Ms Rosales did make us proud with her feats abroad, capped by that leg win in the US Ladies Golf Association circuit.

Unfortunately, that crowning jewel received repeated dint after Ms Rosales had to figure in a series of final-round collapses.

She did earn a hefty fortune this year.

But, in the end, there were those who did not hesitate to christen Ms Rosales the female counterpart of Frankie Miñoza.

In case you're wondering, Miñoza, often a splendid starter but no great shake in the finishing stretches, is also known as Captain Collapse among a group of committed par-busters.

Based on the choice of our top awardees, looking back at what happened to Philippine sports in 2004 may not be too good an idea.

The check-up, you bet, could only leave the concerned sports fan shaking his head.

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CONGRATULATIONS
to the
Alabang Ladies Chapter,
WGAP Cup 2004
Champions!

**MEMBERS** of the champion Alabang team gather at their home course after pulling off the big victory.

# Alabang regains WGAP diadem

THE ALABANG Ladies team rode the momentum of a torrid start to surprise the fancied teams and reclaim the Womens' Golf Association of the Philippines (WGAP) Cup held for three consecutive weekends in as many courses recently.

The Alabang team composed of Joan Morales, Lolit Arguellés, Lorna Tabuena, Ofie Carlos, Vivian Chua, Gina Tuason, Finina Gorres, Maria Brumann, Issa Velayo, Melanie Villar and Nela Fornier dominated the elite five-team field to recapture the season-ending title they last won two years ago.

Alabang won three of its four matches at the start of the series at Manila Golf played under the aggregate format with big efforts by the pairs of Tabuena-Carlos, Morales-Arguelles and Velayo-Chua.

As the showdown among the five qualifiers from an eight-leg circuit moved to the Canlubang north course, Alabang remained dominant with a three-for-four performance under best-ball format behind the tandems of Tuason-Arguelles, Morales-Chua and Gorres-Brumann.

Carrying a commanding lead, the final alternate shot format played at The Country Club proved to be just a mere formality for the Alabang ladies with Tabuena-Carlos, Morales-Arguelles and Tuason-Villar delivering 2.5 more points.

In the final standings, Alabang wound up with 8.5 points to beat Villamor which had 6.5. Early favorite Sta. Elena placed third with 6, Wack Wack had 5 and Manila Southwood 4.

Alabang captain Eden Hamilton praised her team members for a job well done.

"They really worked hard for it," said Hamilton. "They were not given a big chance of winning against the other teams at the start of competitions but pulled off a big surprise."

The five contending teams were the top pointers at the conclusion of the eight-leg WGAP circuit held last April to October. In the regular WGAP circuit, the Alabang Ladies team emerged as second overall leader but bagged the championship in both Class B and Class C.

# Memories of phony fights on TV

CLEAN LIVING

*Manolo R. Iñigo*

THERE is no denying that American promoter Murad Muhammad helped revive Manny Pacquiao's flourishing boxing career. Pacquiao himself said Murad did play a big role in launching his successful ring campaign, especially in the United States, starting in 2001 when he fought Lehlohonolo Ledwaba for the IBF (International Boxing Federation) super bantamweight championship.

Since then, everything went dandy until recently when the Filipino fighter wised up to the manipulations and broken promises of Murad by refusing to sign a two-fight contract presented by the glib-tongued promoter from New Jersey. However, Pacquiao relented and signed the contracts after getting assurance that he would receive the promised $900,000 purse for his next fight against Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico in February whether or not the Mexican agrees to fight him. Marquez and Pacquiao fought to a nail-biting 12-round draw in Las Vegas last May.

Under the terms of the new contracts, it is now HBO and not Murad that will be calling the shots, thus assuring Pacquiao of a better deal this time. Still, I'm wary because I'm reminded of unfortunate incidents in the past involving American television networks which came under fire for television phony fights and frequent mismatches in their hunger for ratings and big money.

In 1977, ABC staged a tournament called the United States Boxing Championships. "It seemed a dream come true for many faceless hardworking fighters who toiled in backwater arenas for a couple of hundred bucks and the free use of a locker," said famed American sports journalist Howard Cosell. "This was to be their opportunity for glory, and the tournament was universally praised in publications such as The New York Times and Sports Illustrated."

Cosell said it was promoter Dong King who had persuaded Roone Arledge, the president of ABC Sports, to bankroll the tournament. To safeguard ABC's interests, Arledge got King to agree to two stipulations: King was to sue Jim Farley, the chair of the New York State Athletic Commission, as a consultant charged with selecting referees and judges for the matches and he was also to use Ring magazine as his source for fighters' records and rankings. But soon the whispers of favoritism, kickbacks, falsified records and rigged ratings began to threaten the integrity and success of the tournament. After the sixth week of fights, Arledge pulled the tournament off the air.

Then in 1983, the NBC Television Network put up the money and agreed to televise one of the most egregious examples of a boxing mismatch, the IBF heavyweight title fight between battle-tested champion Larry Holmes and young and inexperienced Marvis Frazier, son of former heavyweight champ Smokin' Joe Frazier.

As expected, Holmes knocked out Marvis Frazier in the first round with a potentially lethal right-hand punch. Murad Muhammad was one of the promoters of that one-sided fight which was approved at the last minute by the IBF, then a new organization comprised of various state boxing commissions, although both the more prestigious World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association had refused to sanction the bout as a championship fight.

And speaking of Murad, Pacquiao said, "I lost $800,000 in prize money when Murad failed to keep his promise last year." Pacquiao recalled that after his dramatic 11th round knockout victory over Marco Antonio Barrera in November 2003, Murad promised him that his next bout would be against Erik Morales for a purse of $1.5 million. But Murad failed to seal the fight with Morales and he met Marquez instead on May 8 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. In that fight against Marquez, Pacquiao received $700,000 out of the promised $1.5 million.

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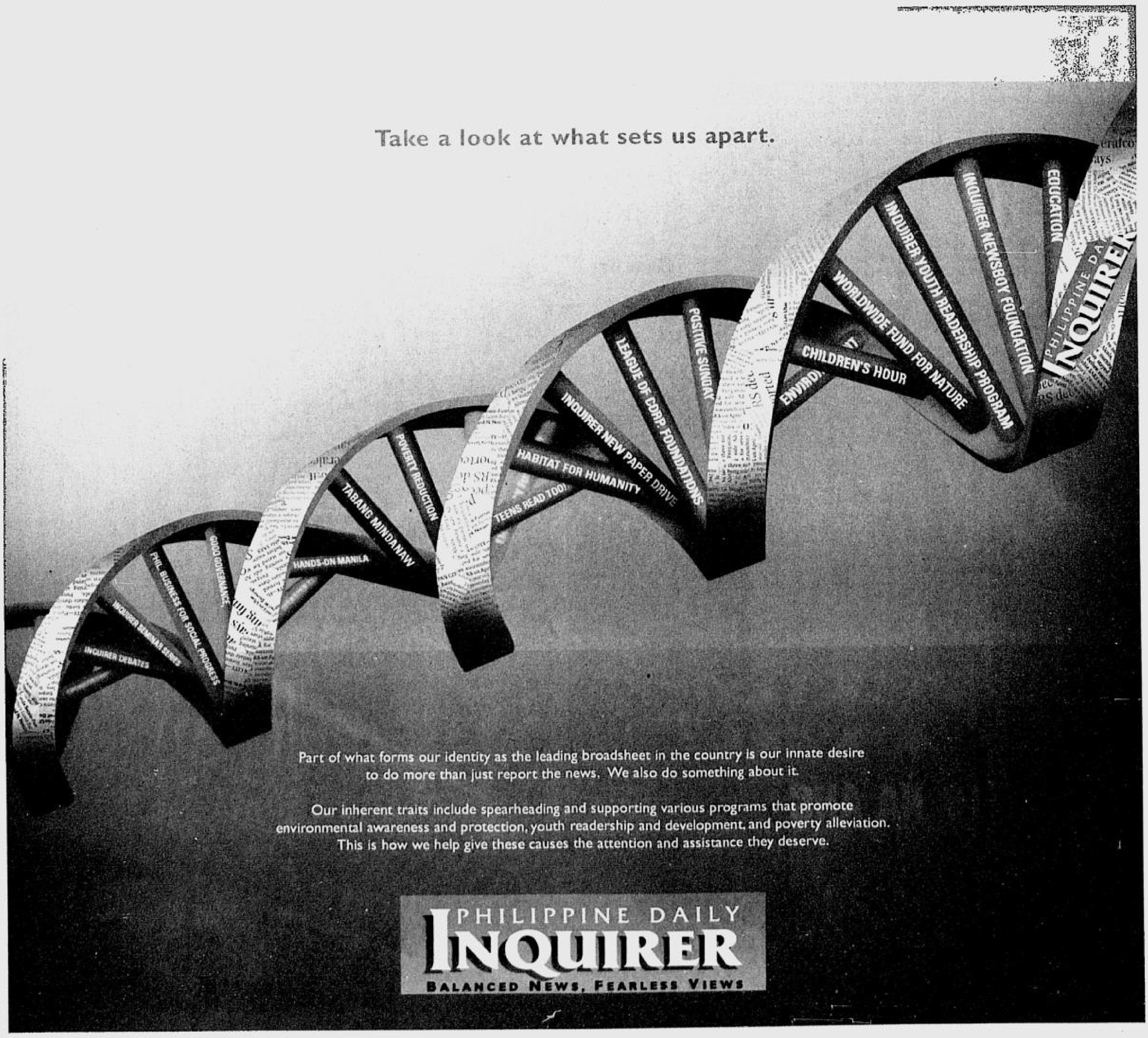
**POTPOURRI.** Former Tourism Secretary and now Philippine Southeast Asian Games Organizing Committee chair Obet Pagdanganan faces a major problem in raising the badly needed funds for next year's SEA Games. For sure, he has been wounded by the difficult times because, except for a few captive sponsors, many prospective supporters are reportedly backing out...Popular horse owner Hermie Esguerra is donating part of his winnings for the whole month of December to the victims of the killer typhoons which hit the country recently...Athletics and chess president Go Teng Kok is deserving of a leadership award in sports. There is no question that he is controversial, but it is on record that Go heads not only one of the most productive NSAs in the Philippine Olympic Committee, but he is also the main man who patched up the bitter differences between the country's warring chess leaders. Let's give credit where credit is due.



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

# Lorona fights Thai for WBO belt today

**By Salven L. Lagumbay**
*Contributor*

YOUNG Filipino Isidro Lorona slugs it out with Pramuansak Posuwan today for the undefeated Thai's WBO Asia Pacific super flyweight belt in Bangkok, Thailand.

The fight is scheduled for 12 rounds.

Lorona, a protege of Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani of Cebu, and Pramuansak easily made the 115-lb limit during the official weigh-in supervised by WBO's Leon Panoncillo held at Bangkok's Yanhee General Hospital.

Lorona will be fighting a foe with a 24-0 record littered with a total of 10 Filipino scalps. The Thai's record includes 14 wins by way of stoppages.

The thing going for Lorona is his youth and hunger for international accomplishment.

Lorona, 23, will go into the fight 13 years Pramuansak's junior.

"Lorona will be banking on his youth and speed," said Gello-ani, who also helped Dindo Castanares win the WBF junior welterweight crown last Dec. 11 in New Zealand.

In the undercard, Filipino Jun Arlos takes on WBO Asia Pacific junior fly champ Kaichon Sor Vorapin in a 10-round non-title bout.

# Gejon assured of title crack next year

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MANDAUE City-raised Eriberto "Yukka" Gejon challenges World Boxing Association minimumweight kingpin Yutaka Niida in Japan sometime in March, bidding to become the next Filipino world boxing champion.

Rex "Wakee" Salud, who manages Gejon, said in an interview that his ward has already been assured of a crack at the Japanese's title.

"We are just waiting for March. Gejon should be ready by then," said Salud, who also made world champions out of brothers Dodie Boy and Gerry Peñalosa and Malcolm Tuñacao.

Gejon, 20-0-1 with 12 knockouts, is the top contender for Niida's crown.

He is also ranked No. 3 by the Mexico-based WBC and No. 9 by the New Jersey-based IBF.

The former Philippine minifly champ, Gejon won the WBA Fedelatin minimumweight crown last Jan. 31 with a technical decision over Carlos Melo in Caracas, Venezuela.

The Yokohama-based Niida, 26, is coming off a split-decision victory over Juan Landaeta last Oct. 30 in Japan.

YOUNG booters of Benguet State University and Del Monte Football Club clash in the championship match of the PFF/Red Ribbon Football Fiesta at the Ateneo pitch in Katipunan recently. Del Monte won, 1-0, to cop the under-14 title.

# Football Fiesta a big hit

MORE than 4,000 players, 14 years old and younger, saw action in six months of competition for a total of 232 teams in 29 provinces throughout the country in the 2004 Red Ribbon Football Fiesta.

Organized by the various provincial associations of the Philippine Football Federation (PFF), the country's premiere Under-14 tournament kicked off in Zamboanga last July and ended with the finals of the NCR leg last Dec. 19 at the Ateneo de Manila grounds.

Grand opening and closing ceremonies in most provinces highlighted the year even as scholarships were awarded to the Most Valuable Players in provinces like Butuan, Bukidnon and Iligan.

The football season ended with the holding of the 10-hour, 7-a-side PFF/Red Ribbon Football Festival, complete with skills and games tents with prizes and food stalls to keep players, their families and friends occupied.

Joaqui Preysler emceed the affair, which also raised funds for the unfortunate typhoon victims.

Mike Barredo of the Philippine Sports Commission, Jun Capistrano, director of University Athletics at Ateneo, Vince Santos, head of football for the Lead Institute for Sport, Danny Moran, president of Red Ribbon Bakeshop, members of the men's and women's national teams, and PFF president Johnny Romualdez graced the event.

MATTEO Guidicelli (right) with fellow Filipino karter Marlon Stockringer after the awarding ceremony

# Guidicelli clinches 2nd in Asian Zone

SENTUL, Indonesia—The Philippines' Matteo Guidicelli made a big impression as he landed runner-up in the Asian karting crown at the culmination of the 2004 Asian Zone Open Karting Championship at the Sentul Circuit here.

The 14-year-old Guidicelli, backed by Addict Mobile Prepaid, Penshoppe and Swatch, had some rough sail during the weekend yet gave a strong fight in the premiere Junior Intercontinental-A class to emerge overall runner-up to 2004 Asian Karting champion Calvin Wongwengman of Malaysia.

Guidicelli lost the Asian Karting crown to Wongwengman by just two points because of the drop-one race system. He was also the best Filipino podium finisher that weekend since another top Filipino bet, Michelle Bumgarner wound up third after spinning out of the race in the final three laps of the Formula Open class.

His karts arrived late, leaving him with only one hour to practice and later found out the terrible bend on the chassis that left him dead last in the five-man field of the qualifying heats.

Still determined to win, Guidicelli made a big dive in two separate coming to jump from fifth to third place and a few laps after passed compatriot Mark Bumgarner to wrest second place in Sunday morning's 20-lap pre-final race.

He came even with Wongwengman in the early goings of the 25-lap final race. Guidicelli stepped on the gas and grabbed the lead from the Malaysian rival.

However, Wongwengman's engine was really powerful that he regained the lead at the 50-meter straight going to the finish line to claim the checkered flag.

Guidicelli took the runner-up finish while another Malaysian driver, Firhan Jazeman, checked in third.

"We had limited time to practice with the late arrival of the karts costing us precious time to prepare for the race," related Guidicelli who will be more active in the Italian Championship Open 2005.

"We never gave up and gave it all we got," he added. "We lost the Asian Karter crown, but the RP team's fighting spirit here earned the big respect of the Asian karting community."

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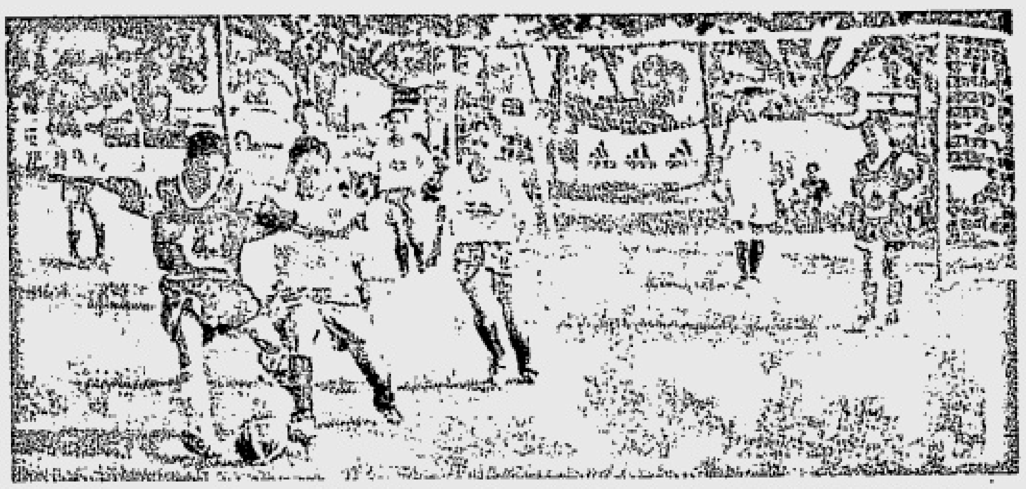

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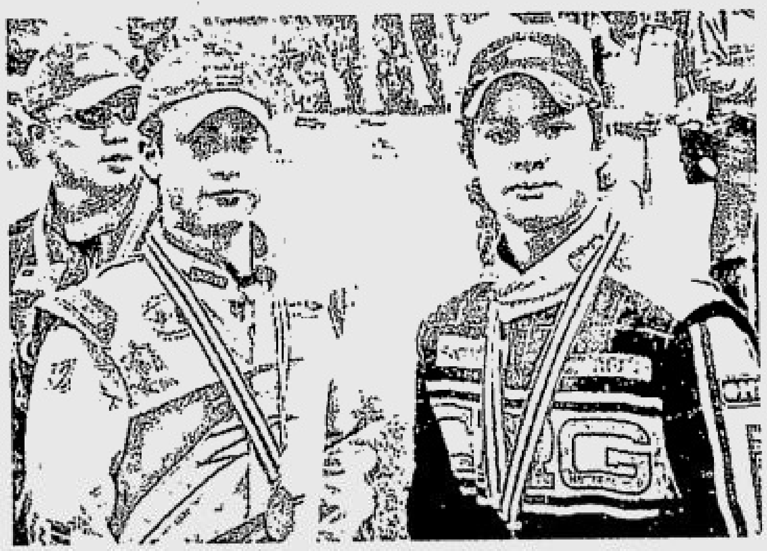
Joaqui Preysler emceed the affair, which also raised funds for the unfortunate typhoon victims.

Mike Barredo of the Philippine Sports Commission, Jun Capistrano, director of University Athletics at Ateneo, Vince Santos, head of football for the Lead Institute for Sport, Danny Moran, president of Red Ribbon Bakeshop, members of the men's and women's national teams, and PFF president Johnny Romualdez graced the event.



**MATTEO** Guidicelli (right) with fellow Filipino karter Marlon Stockringer after the awarding ceremony

# Guidicelli clinches 2nd in Asian Zone

SENTUL, Indonesia—The Philippines' Matteo Guidicelli made a big impression as he landed runner-up in the Asian karting crown at the culmination of the 2004 Asian Zone Open Karting Championship at the Sentul Circuit here.

The 14-year-old Guidicelli, backed by Addict Mobile Prepaid, Penshoppe and Swatch, had some rough sail during the weekend yet gave a strong fight in the premiere Junior Intercontinental-A class to emerge overall runner-up to 2004 Asian Karting champion Calvin Wongwengman of Malaysia.

Guidicelli lost the Asian Karting crown to Wongwengman by just two points because of the drop-one race system. He was also the best Filipino podium finisher that weekend since another top Filipino bet, Michelle Bumgarner wound up third after spinning out of the race in the final three laps of the Formula Open class.

His karts arrived late, leaving him with only one hour to practice and later found out the terrible bend on the chassis that left him dead last in the five-man field of the qualifying heats.

Still determined to win, Guidicelli made a big dive in two separate coming to jump from fifth to third place and a few laps after passed compatriot Mark Bumgarner to wrest second place in Sunday morning's 20-lap pre-final race.

He came even with Wongwengman in the early goings of the 25-lap final race. Guidicelli stepped on the gas and grabbed the lead from the Malaysian rival.

However, Wongwengman's engine was really powerful that he regained the lead at the 50-meter straight going to the finish line to claim the checkered flag.

Guidicelli took the runner-up finish while another Malaysian driver, Firhan Jazeman, checked in third.

"We had limited time to practice with the late arrival of the karts costing us precious time to prepare for the race," related Guidicelli who will be more active in the Italian Championship Open 2005.

"We never gave up and gave it all we got," he added. "We lost the Asian Karter crown, but the RP team's fighting spirit here earned the big respect of the Asian karting community."

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## GLORIOUS, SCANDALOUS

# A vintage year in sports arena

**SURE shots, long shots and once-in-a-lifetime shots—2004 had them all.**

It was an over-the-top, out-of-control year, sensational in glorious and scandalous senses.

Halley's Comet comes around every 76 years. The Boston Red Sox hadn't won the World Series in 86 years.

Nobody ever won a World Series or even a league championship down 0-3 in games, much less three outs from a sweep.

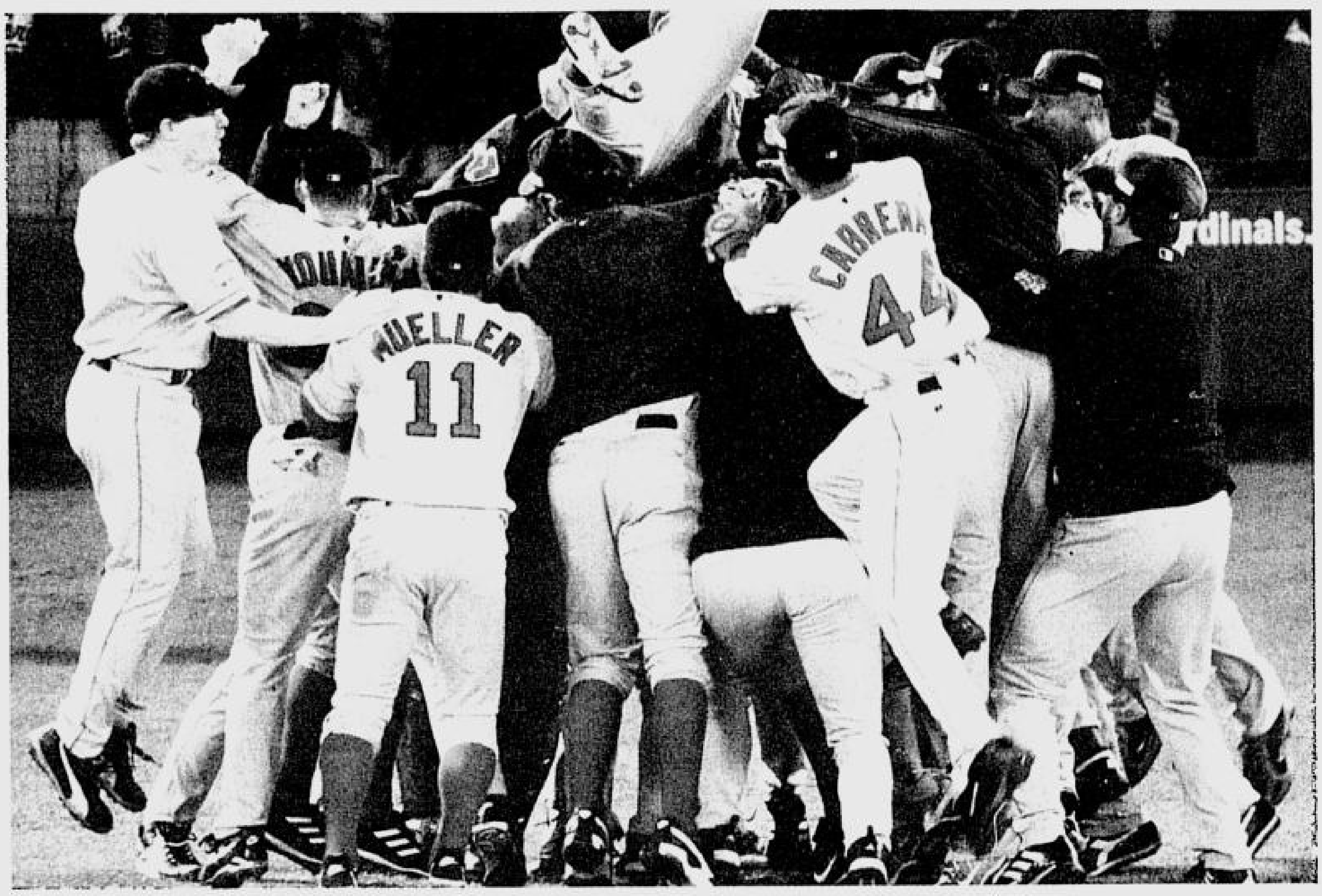
A gutsy bettor with blind faith in the Red Sox could have made millions plunking down dough on them at that particularly bleak moment when a sweep by their ancient and annual enemy, the New York Yankees, seemed inevitable.

It took a self-proclaimed team of "idiots," undaunted by history or curses, to flip fate and make 2004 one of sport's greatest vintage years.

One of the most enduring images of the year—illustrating what it took to win and what it meant to those who did—was the bloodstained sock of Curt Schilling. It gave new meaning to Red Sox and belongs in the Hall of Fame.

Stitched to pitch, Schilling inspired his teammates and lifted the suffering generations of Red Sox Nation scattered around the globe. It was a medical miracle, if not a heavenly one, the very opposite of what Boston's many pessimistic fans had come to expect.

The signs at Fenway read "Believe," and millions did, even if they feared down to the last out that something, somehow would go wrong as it always had since 1918.


RED Sox jubilate after completing their amazing comeback in their World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals.

Yet Schilling delivered and David Ortiz, Manny Ramirez, Jason Varitek, Johnny Damon, Kevin Millar, Orlando Cabrera and the others did the rest, stunning the Yankees and sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals in the most amazing team comeback in sports history.

"All empires fall sooner or later," Red Sox president Larry Lucchino said after the Yankees became the first baseball team to lose a seven-game series from a 3-0 lead.

"1918 is gone forever," Boston outfielder Trot Nixon said when the Series ended. "We're not going to have to hear about that again."

He was wrong, though in a good way. These Red Sox will hear forever how they broke the so-called Curse of the Bambino.

Roll back the calendar to Jan. 1 and imagine betting on the New England Patriots to win the Super Bowl en route to an NFL-record 21-game winning streak and the Boston Red Sox to sweep the World Series in the same year. What would you have won if you parlayed those with bets on the starless Detroit Pistons to win the NBA title and the Sunshine State's Tampa Bay Lightning to win the Stanley Cup?

What if, along the way, you ran up the winnings by betting that a single school would win the men's and women's Final Four in basketball. No school ever had. Connecticut did.

And what were the odds back then that Vijay Singh would win nine times in the year, become golf's first US$10 million man, and replace Tiger Woods as No. 1 in the world?

Or that Switzerland's Roger Federer, uncoached, would become the first man since 1988 to win three Grand Slam tennis titles?

"Roger just played too good today," Andy Roddick said after losing to Federer in the Wimbledon final. "I threw the kitchen sink at him, but he went to the bathroom and got a tub."

Singh and Federer weren't huge shocks to rise to the top of their sports, but to win on the scale they did was extraordinary.

There was far less surprise in seeing Lance Armstrong pedal to a record sixth straight Tour de France, Michael Schumacher win a seventh Formula One title or Kurt Busch capture NASCAR's Nextel Cup in a new championship format.

Nor, despite their advanced age, was there astonishment in seeing Roger Clemens win a record seventh Cy Young award or Barry Bonds join Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron in the 700-homer club while winning a record seventh MVP. *AP*

2 rights activists killed by vigilantes in Or. Mindoro
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SARS-hit village isolated
Second suspected SARS death reported
No way out for Meralco; SC says ruling final

The Good News

[illegible]

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# 'Santa' Aga's drive benefits 500,000

**By Jocelyn Valle**
*Contributor*

**SHOW STOPPER**

EVEN when he's no longer a Jollibee endorser, he will continue to help the burger company's annual Christmas project for underprivileged kids, Aga Muhlach told INQUIRER Entertainment during the recent party that concluded this year's event.

The 35-year-old movie and TV actor has been appearing in the food giant's commercials for the last 10 years. According to the company's website, Aga approached Jollibee in 1995 with the idea of a nationwide toy drive for kids on Christmas.

The project was named "MaAGA ang Pasko sa Jollibee." The actor started the ball rolling by asking friends from show business to participate.

Aga said he never thought his pet project would get bigger every year. During the party held last Dec. 15 at the St. Paul Pasig gymnasium, he proudly said, "To date, we have collected toys and books for 500,000 recipients."

Jollibee's website reports that in 1997, the project donated nearly 14,000 toys to 50 charitable institutions around the country. The following year, the number of beneficiary organizations grew to nearly 80. And in 2000, 64,226 toys and 3,956 books were collected and distributed to more than 100 institutions.

## No fanfare

Different groups of kids come to the party every year, said Aga. This year, the 200 youngsters who turned up were from the depressed areas of Baseco, Payatas and Commonwealth Avenue, all in Quezon City; the flood-devastated barangays in Marikina City; and Nayon ng Kabataan, a government institution that houses orphans until they find foster homes.

"Every year we do this without fanfare," Aga said. "We allowed media coverage now only because it's our 10th year already."

Aga laughed when told that the plastic bags containing the gifts were taller than some of the kids aged four to 10.

"From the way they look, you wouldn't say they are ever sad," he said. "They don't enjoy listening to people talking on stage. Usually, they say thanks to me and then ask for more toys."

The actor noted that the toys and books given out during the party constituted a very small percentage of this year's total collection.

The rest would be distributed all over the archipelago, including some very remote barrios, he said.

"This is possible because Jollibee works hand in hand with the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development)," he explained.

## Perfect image

DSWD's representative, Undersecretary Lualhati Pablo, said of Aga: " He has a very pleasing personality. His wholesome image is perfect for the kids. You know, not all actors can be effective in this kind of program.

"And because he is identified with the program, more and more people support it every year."

"If this lasts forever," Aga vowed, "I'll make sure this will be sustained, even if I'm no longer with Jollibee. If they ask for my help, I wouldn't mind of course. After all, this can be done only in December."

Aga said he had just come from the hospital, where he had an executive check-up. That was why his 3-year-old twins, Andres and Atasha, could not come with him. He still had no gifts for them, he added. The girl likes Barbie dolls and the boy is crazy about Spider-Man.

"Whenever I run, I stretch out my arms as though I am using Spider-Man's web-blaster," he laughed.

Don't they get jealous when they see him

SANTA'/ A34

**"IF THIS lasts forever, I'll make sure this will be sustained, even if I'm no longer with Jollibee," vows Aga.**

**DON'T Andres and Atasha get jealous when they see him surrounded by other children? "Not at all," Aga replies.**

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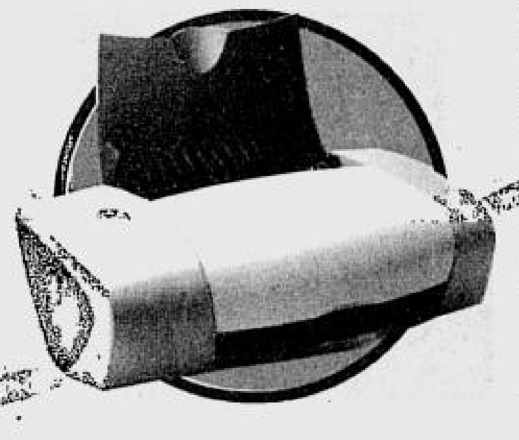

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3427, Series of 2004
PLDT

# 'Santa' Aga's drive benefits 500,000

From page A33

surrounded by other children?

"Not at all," he replied. "They actually like it. They are very close to me. In our village (Ayala Alabang), they interact with other kids. They are friendly and disciplined. Atasha is friendlier. Andres usually tests the water first before approaching anyone."

### Strict dad

Aga is a mainstay on the ABS-CBN sitcom, "OK, Fine, Whatever." Though he only had one movie, "All My Life," shown this year, it was a blockbuster.

For 2005, he said, he is set to do two projects. The first one will have Regine Velasquez, his leading lady in two past movies, and Judy Ann Santos in the cast.

The other will be a family drama to be shot in Dubai.

Speaking of family, Aga admitted that he is a strict father.

"I don't spoil my children with toys," he said. "Whatever they have are mostly gifts. I don't want to expose them to too much computers and TV, either.

"I'd rather spend on their education, and teach them about life."

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CHRISTMAS BASH

"HIS WHOLESOME image is perfect for the kids," the Department of Social Welfare and Development says of Aga.

# Gilopez Kabayao has new album

**By Carla P. Gomez**
*PDI Visayas Bureau*

BACOLOD CITY–A new Christmas CD by Ilonggo artist Gilopez Kabayao and his family is now out in the market.

"Sounds of Christmas" features some of the season's most popular hymns and carols, as performed by by Gilopez and his children Sicilienne, Farida and Gilberto on the violins, and his wife, Corazon, on the piano.

These are songs that anyone can sing "at the drop of a hat," Gilopez says.

**SHOW STOPPER**

"But only after one examines the lyrics more closely and ponders their deeper meaning will one hear more than just the music," he adds.

"The real sounds of Christmas are the praises attributed to the Messiah, to the baby in swaddling clothes born in a manger somewhere in Bethlehem one still, 'Silent Night,' the one they call the 'Beautiful Savior, the Beautiful Redeemer.'"

Kabayao adds: "The deafening sounds of Christmas could be the chorus of angels shouting 'Glorias,' and the blowing of trumpets to announce the joy that will come to the world as people acknowledge that indeed, 'Jesus, He shall be Great.'"

The artist says the Kabayao Family Quintet welcomes the rare privilege of expressing, through their musical gifts, the "Sounds of His Love" and the message that they bring "to all who embrace the true meaning of having Jesus at the center of every Christmas."

# Mossimo, 'a heart for the arts'

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ALTHOUGH it traces its roots to the United States where Mossimo Gianulli founded the brand in 1986, Mossimo has always been a strong supporter of Filipino artists.

"We have always believed in the talent of Filipino artists," says Mossimo Philippines marketing manager Mags Deles-David. "With the right support, there's always a chance that one or more of them will make it big in the international scene someday."

In 2004 alone, Mossimo supported a number of local artists, including Pido, Rebekah and Kitchie Nadal.

Pido was part of the original Side A and was later vocalist of Pido With Take One. He decided to launch himself as a solo artist with the release of his album "Bittersweet." The 12-track album brings to mind the gentle warmth of soft-rock legends like James Taylor and Kenny Loggins, with a unique Filipino touch.

Pido collaborated with Paolo Santos, Joey Benin of Side A, Jay Durias and Tata Balane of South Border, Wendell Garcia and Rommel de la Cruz of Barbie's Cradle, Nikki Cabardo of Freestyle, Tots Tolentino, Mike Luis, Mar Dizon and more.

Rebekah, a protege of pop diva Kuh Ledesma who discovered her on a TV singing competition, is now promoting her single, "Stop;" which she herself composed. The promising singer with a powerful voice was recently signed up by E-Real Records, a US-based recording outfit owned by a group of Pinoys led by Floyd Evangelista.

The group intends to promote Rebekah as a Filipino artist abroad, a move fully supported by Mossimo.

One of the biggest surprises of 2004 was the success of Kitchie Nadal. After only two months in the market, the album picked up a gold record award and is now on its way to turning platinum, on the strength of its carrier single, "Wag Na Wag Mong Sasabihin." The song shot to the No. 1 slot on WLS FM, DWTM, 99.5 RT and WRR 101.9 no. 3 at RX 93, NU 107, Jam 88.3, No. 4 at Mellow Touch 94.7. It also hit number one at "MTV Diyes" and is currently No. 3 on the MYX Hit Chart.

Also on the list of local artists supported by Mossimo in 2004 are pop diva Kuh Ledesma, acoustic singers Paolo Santos and Jimmy Bondoc, soul siren Nina, the Essence Band, DJ Mike of the Akafellas who also emerged first runner-up in the 2004 Mossimo Bikini Summit, Thor, Jed Maddela, the Take One band, the rap group Sun Valley Crew and teen diva Sarah Geronimo.

But true to its reputation as a company with "a heart for the arts", Mossimo also supported the shows and albums of foreign artists during their visits to the Philippines. These included Joshua Payne, Brian McKnight, Boyz II Men, Mariah Carey and Keith Martin.

After 2004, Mossimo means to go all-out again in supporting the best of Filipino and international talents in 2005.

PIDO, from band singer to solo artist

REBEKAH, from singing contestant to diva's choice

# Mark's first gold

FOR HIS "Mark Bautista" album

MARK Bautista, young star of the Metro Manila Film Festival entry "Lastikman," has marked a major milestone in his singing career with his first Gold Record Award for his self-titled debut album. Mark received the award recently from Viva Records A&R director Eugene Villaluz during a recent telecast of the ABS-CBN Sunday variety show, "Asap" where he is a regular performer.

The singer-actor was a finalist in the "Star for a Night" contest held two years ago. His album, "Mark Bautista," consists of love songs, like "Baliw," "Ako'y Maghihintay," "Another Chance," "The Power of Love," "Ngayon at Kailanman," "One Girl," and his hit, the Vehnee Saturno composition "Ang Lahat sa Buhay Ko."

Mark is being launched to big screen stardom via the title role in "Lastikman." He plays the good-hearted Adrian, who is given superpowers by an enchanted tree to become the defender of the oppressed. The movie is directed by Mac Alejandre and also stars Cherie Gil, Sarah Geronimo, John Estrada and Danilo Barrios.

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# Mark San Diego is our man 'Bond'

MARK SAN DIEGO

MARK San Diego emerged as the local winner in Star Movies' "R U Bond Enough?" pan-Asia talent search for the ultimate Asian James Bond.

Mark, a commercial model who portrayed Agent 007 in his first television commercial, bested five other Bond hopefuls in the website and SMS voting as well as in the scorecards of the panel of judges composed of Star Movies and Channel [V] programming heads.

"Bond Mark" will now compete with other Bond finalists from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand in the regional competition.

The ultimate Bond gets the chance to be a VJ on Star and co-host a show. He also wins a trip for two to Sweden and a stay at the IceHotel, just like the one in the US$424-million grossing "Die Another Day."

Filipinos can support Bond Mark in the final website and SMS voting and win prizes in the process by logging on to www.ilovestarmovies.com, or sending their votes by typing "Bond Mark" to 2949 for Globe and 7827 for Smart subscribers.

On Dec. 31, Star Movies will reveal the ultimate Asian super spy who is "Bond Enough" during the premiere of "Die Another Day" starting at 9 p.m.

# Batangas board member is now in movies, too

MARC LEVISTE

WHAT do politicians-turned-actors have in common? They cannot resist the glamour and popularity attendant to show business ... not necessarily because they seek matinee idol status, but because deep inside lies the desire to take on a role and act it out.

The ranks of politicians who have been lured by show business run a long list and they proved to be good performers in their own right.

Presidential son Mikee Arroyo is a congressman and an action star. "Spice Boy" Miguel Zubiri is also a congressman-turned-television host. Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid was a provincial board member before entering show biz. Kim Atienza, former councilor of Manila, turned news reporter. Even Loren Legarda played a movie cameo role while she was still a senator.

And now, Marc Leviste, topnotcher in the last elections for the provincial board of Batangas, is now a cast member of "Mano Po 3, My Love," Regal Film's official Metro Manila Film Festival entry. This is his first movie appearance so far.

### Fantasy no more

During a recent interview, Marc expressed excitement over his role as the confidant of lead star Jay Manalo, who plays the husband of Vilma Santos.

"This is a fantasy come true," Marc said. "Not only do I get to be a part of the growing Regal Family; I also get to work with my mayor (Vilma)."

Marc and Mayor Vi belong to the same political party. He is also Loren's nephew.

A talent of Cal Carries International Models, Marc says he has done some television commercials and guestings. But "Mano Po" is, understandably, his most significant show biz stint so far.

"I have Chinese-Filipino traits, and I am also a big fan of the 'Mano Po' series," he says.

Let's hope that this young man will continue to pave the way for the welfare of the next generation by dutifully "acting out" his role as a public servant.

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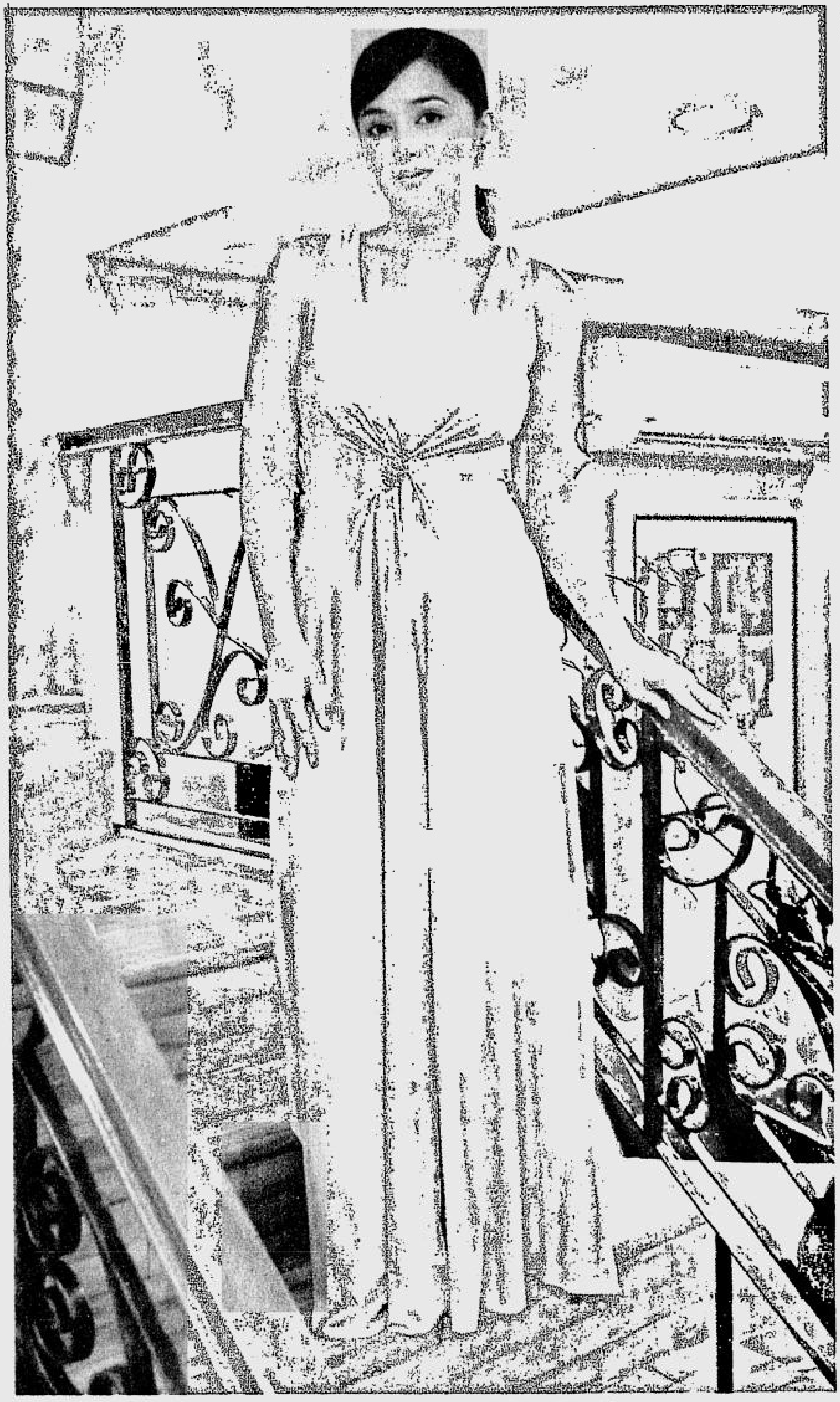
# Jessa: I will never look dumpy



THIS green gown by Bea Alberto is Jessa's favorite. "It's very versatile," the fashionable mom says.

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

## OUT OF THE CLOSET

SINGER-ACTRESS Jessa Zaragosa-Avanzado confesses that her greatest fear is to look dumpy and older than her age.

"That's why I wake up early and spend hours at the gym," Jessa, 25, told INQUIRER Entertainment at the Avanzado home in Quezon City. "I do weight training and body toning. I have a personal trainer. Now that [my daughter] Jayda is more than a year old, I can leave her to the *yaya* while I hit the gym."

Jessa is married to singer Dingdong Avanzado. Their firstborn was delivered by cesarean section last June 1, 2003.

"I don't do sit-ups yet. My gynecologist, Dr. Margarita Agdamag, said I could do some cardio exercises, but that I should stop the moment I feel pain," she explained.

Jessa was part of the soap series "Bituin" on ABS-CBN when she got pregnant. She left the show when she was six months along, because "I didn't want people to see how fat I was."

"I became really overweight—until after I gave birth. I weighed 157 lb. For a five-footer like me, that was too much," she said. "So I watched my food intake very carefully. I went on a diet of grilled chicken and fish, cereals, wheat bread and skim milk.

"When I was pregnant and still doing 'Bituin,' I had a difficult time finding the right clothes," Jessa recounted. "I still wore tight-fitting blouses and tube tops, but I didn't use most of my high-heeled shoes. I asked my friend, designer JC Buendia, to make pants for me. I told him I wanted the flared-cut types that would make me look slimmer."

The fashionable star said she now wants to inspire other moms to always look good. "Having babies shouldn't mean that taking care of yourself is no longer important."

**Tops.** "I prefer solid colors, although I also own a few striped shirts. I got this striped top in the States two years ago. Does it look faded? I wear this all the time. I love it because it emphasizes my shoulders.

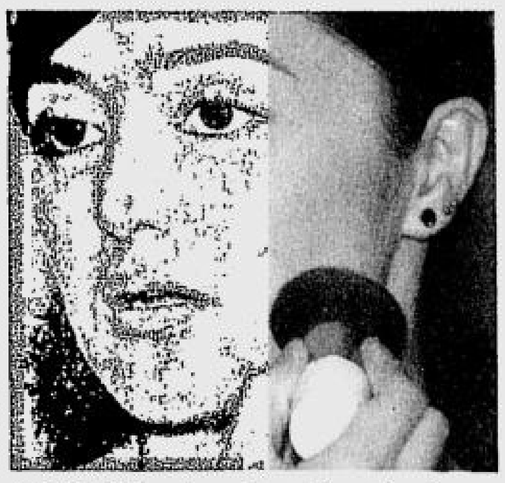
"I also like this red halter top from People Are People. *Ang puti ko kasi dito*. The cut makes me look thin, and hides all the flab.

"I love tube tops from Tokyo Fashion. I have some in white and black. I go for blouses that are unique. I really don't care about the price or where I get them. *Ayaw ko ng may kapareho*."

**Dresses.** "I wear dresses only when I appear on television. I bought this new red dress

JESSA/ A37

**THE FAVORITE** star earrings from Japan

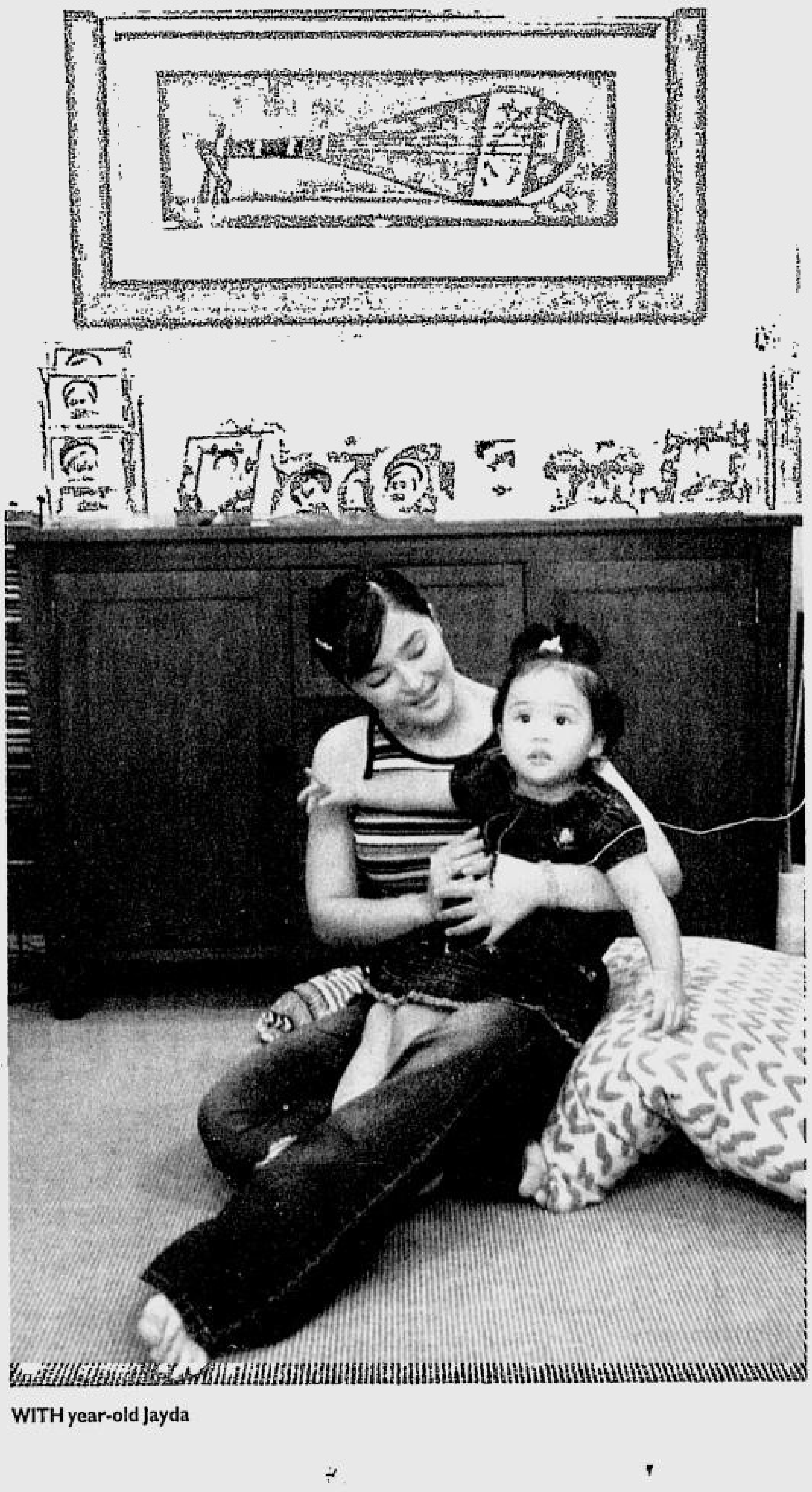


**GOAT-HAIR** make-up brush from Beauty Bar

**SUNGLASSES** from Mango

**J.LO'S GLOW** a gift from Dingdong. But she really prefers baby cologne.

**CATSUIT** from Maxi Cinco is a playful peek-a-boo.



**WITH** year-old Jayda

HER DOLL House jeans look good with any top, Jessa says.

THIS gown reminds her of Pocahontas.

SHE LOVES pointy and strappy sandals, no matter the price.

THE PRE-NATAL figure captured on an album cover

# Jessa: I will never look dumpy

From page A36

because I find it very preppy. *Para akong munting prinsesa*. I've not worn this yet—still looking for the perfect occasion."

"I wore this [other] red dress when GMA 7 featured my life story in 'Magpakailanman.' I like it because the skirt reminds me of the cartoon character Pocahontas. I match the dress with strappy black sandals or red pointed ones.

"This green gown from Bea Alberto is my favorite. I requested a V-shaped outfit and she made this. It's very versatile. I was still wearing this when I was already four months pregnant.

"I've worn this two-piece Larry Espinosa gown so many times. *Sobrang laki na ang kinita nito.* I first used it for my first major concert at the Cuneta Astrodome in 1999. The corset makes my waist look really small.

"The catsuit is from Maxi Cinco. This is similar to what Rosanna Roces wore in one of the awards ceremonies a few years ago. Rosanna's catsuit showed one of her breasts, mine doesn't exactly expose the breasts because the nipples are hidden under the lace. Peek-a-boo *lang*. I wore this in one of my concerts, too, and in a show I did in Japan with Jaya in 1999."

**Jeans.** "Because I'm not tall, I buy jeans that are not too straight. I prefer the boot cut. I'm also into the hipster styles because I don't look good wearing waist-high jeans.

"I bought a pair from Doll House two or three years ago. I like the color and the cut. It makes my big thighs look thin. And it looks good with any top.

"My other favorite pair is a gift from my mom. I don't know where she bought this. *Walang tatak*. I like the fabric because it's faded. Also, I did not have to go to the *modista* to have it repaired. The length was perfect."

**Bags.** "You can't make me leave home with a small bag. I always bring everything—wipes, toothbrush, toothpaste, panty shields. Name it, I have it. Those are just my stuff. When I go out with my daughter, production number *talaga*.

"I love Louis Vuitton bags. I wish I could buy more, but they're very expensive. I bought one for P40,000. I always use the cylindrical one when I go to meetings. I got it in Japan. It was what I bought out of the tips I got from performing there. I gave my talent fee to my family so I really don't feel guilty.

"My friend [singer] Marissa Sanchez gifted me with really cute bags recently. Her sister has a store, Mika's Kloset, at the Robinson's Galleria. Their designs are very unique and up-to-date. The bags remind me of the stuff the girls use in 'Sex and the City.'"

**Shoes.** "I like pointed sandals because they look good with flared jeans. I bought a couple of these in Japan.

"Nine West has very nice strappy sandals. They're kind of expensive, like the Luis Vuitton bags, but they're very sturdy. You can wear them for many years. I have them in black, white and gray.

"I got an Italian pair for P12,000 from a shop in Makati. *Nabigla yata ako sa presyo*. It's really precious, so whenever I ask my *yaya* to clean my shoes, I tell her *ingatan talaga ito mabuti*.

"Boots are my true love. I bought this black pair, I think in Hong Kong, four years ago. I really take care of my boots, that's why they still look new. I constantly brush them and clean their soles to keep molds from accumulating. I also put deodorizers inside the shoe cabinets.

**Perfume.** "I've been using Ralph Lauren for as long as I remember. Right now, I'm using Ralph Lauren Blue. It's their newest scent.

"My husband bought me J.Lo's Glow. It's very sweet. I don't use the really heavy scents because it might irritate my baby.

"I prefer baby cologne to all the perfumes I have. A writer friend gifted my daughter with this cologne from Spain. I liked the scent so much that I decided to use it instead. It's running out, and I don't know where to buy it here."

**Accessories.** "Dingdong gave this Lochman watch to me as a birthday gift. I only asked for a Technomarine. I couldn't believe he bought this. It's so expensive. With the price of this watch, *may pang*-down payment *ka na sa kotse*. Dingdong said it was 'four gives' *naman*.

"My favorite eyeglasses are from Armani and Mango. I prefer those that are rectangular in shape. I don't like tints that are too dark.

"I love make-up, especially Bobby Brown. They're very expensive, but they're very effective so I get to use them for a long time. I like the liquid foundation, *maganda ang kapit*.

"This brush from Beauty Bar is made of goat's hair. *Sobrang ganda ipang*-powder. Very soft.

"I like using hair clips when I wear casual outfits. I got a couple of hair clips at Beauty Bar without looking at their price. When I paid for them, I was shocked to find out that each one cost P400. Swarovski-studded *pala*.

"I bought my favorite earrings in Japan, where I did a show a few years ago. Star *na* star *ang dating ko dito*.

"I also like loop earrings, because they compliment the shape of my face. I'm not into studded earrings, but the ones I'm using right now are very special because a friend gave them.

"My favorite eyelash curler is a Shu Uemura. They say this curler is really made for Asian eyes. *Sukat na sukat*.

"I own a lot of belts, but this one from Bench is my favorite. I guess it's because this is very versatile. It's made of colorful fabrics. I can wear it with anything."

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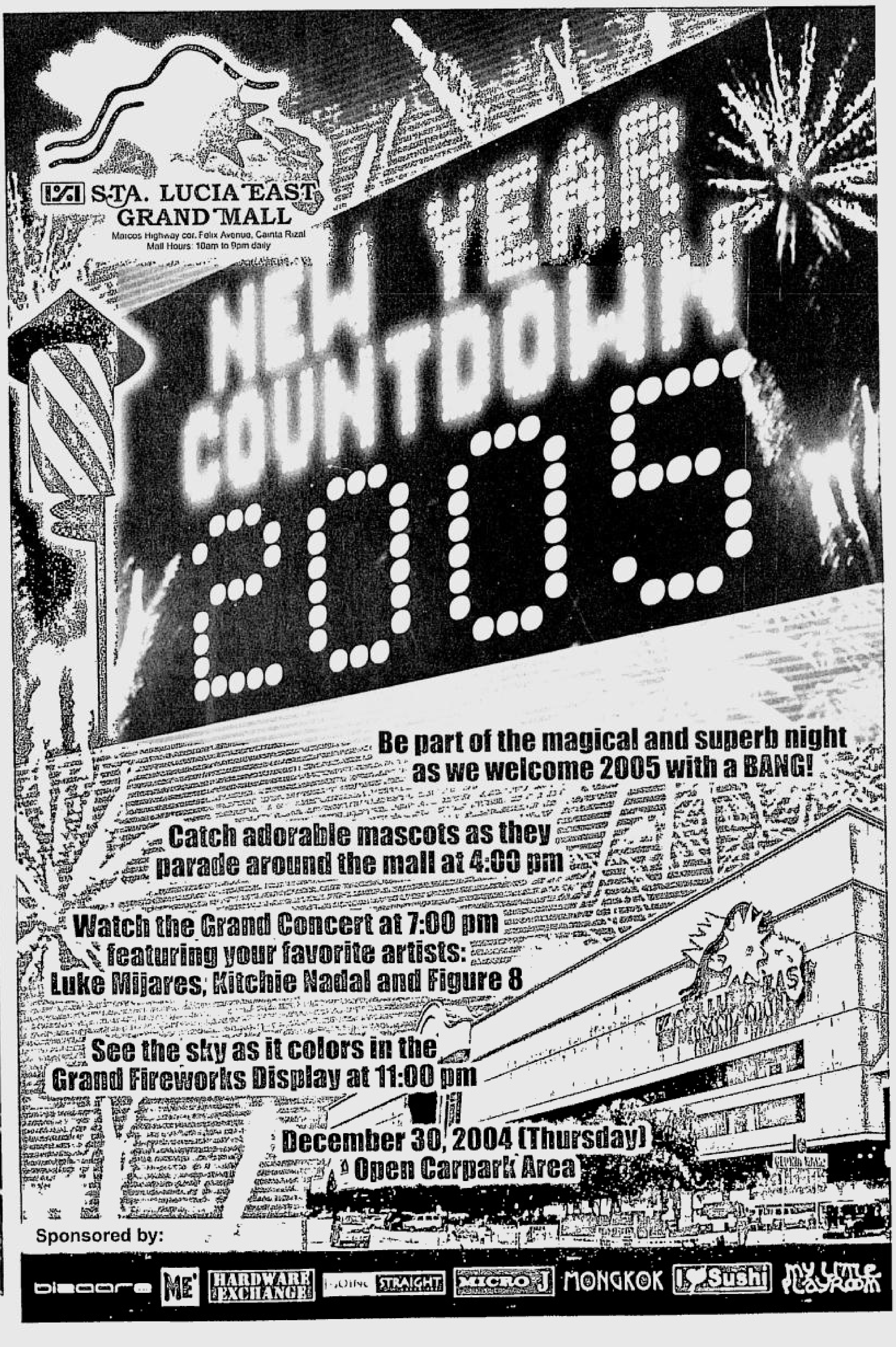
BIG BAGS are her thing, especially those that sport the LV logo.



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# ‘Alternative royal family’ christens baby Beckham in derided Christmas party

LONDON—Britain’s “alternative royal family,” Victoria and David Beckham, were hosting a lavish but much-derided Christmas party on Thursday to christen their sons in the grounds of their “Beckingham Palace” home.

The England soccer captain and his pop star wife, a former Spice Girl, were to welcome a Who’s Who of British celebrities for the evening ceremony at a refurbished chapel amid the fake ruins of a rural mansion.

Aerial photographs in a newspaper showed the private chapel in the grounds of their home at Sawbridgeworth, 56 kilometers north of London.

Media said no expense was being spared, with butlers set to serve guests a six-course meal after the service by a Church of England minister.

“It will, in true Beckham fashion, be an absurdly over-the-top event,” wrote the Daily Mail, which like other tabloids had a large two-page spread on the preparations.

David Beckham—who famously sat with Victoria on thrones when they married in 1999—was said to have scoffed at reports the event was costing 2,500 pounds ($4,900) a head.

“It will be much more than that!” he assured friends, according to the Mail.

## Guest list

Close friend and singer Elton John, and his partner David Furnish, were to be the godfathers to Beckham boys Brooklyn, 5, and Romeo, 2, a spokesperson confirmed to Reuters.

News reports said the guest list also included Liz Hurley and boyfriend Arun Nayar, tennis player Greg Rusedski and wife Lucy, actor Tom Cruise, England soccer manager Sven Goran Eriksson and the other former Spice Girls—Geri Halliwell, Emma Bunton, Melanie Brown and Melanie Chisholm.

The Daily Express said the pregnant Victoria—or “Posh Spice” as she was known in the “Spice Girls” band—had insisted on “modest attire” for the event.

“Pregnant Victoria is said by one guest to be feeling a little insecure about her figure and doesn’t want to be literally overshadowed by displays of decolletage that could have someone’s eye out,” it said. “And yes, that does mean you, Liz Hurley.”

One paper dubbed the chapel “Chav Chapel”—using the new buzzword for young flashy Britons. Photos showed mock ruins the pair have put up by the chapel.

## Kiss and tell

For the Beckhams, the event was clearly meant to put a gloss on an otherwise miserable year.

Victoria has been mercilessly taunted by British media for her stuttering singing career and possessiveness toward her husband. David Beckham has lost respect on the pitch due to mediocre performances for both England and Real Madrid.

And kiss-and-tell revelations by alleged lovers of David during a lonely period in Madrid rocked their marriage.

“The event is seen as an attempt by the couple to show the world that their marriage is back on track and that ‘brand Beckham’ still has global appeal,” the Mail said. *Reuters*

See'eMall!

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | THX AISHITE IMASU | MANO PO 3 | SIGAW | THX GUARANTEED SEATS MANO PO 3 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 | LASTIKMAN |
| 2 | PANAGHOY SA SUBA | ENTENG KABISOTE | AISHITE IMASU | THX GUARANTEED SEATS SPIRIT OF THE GLASS 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 | AISHITE IMASU |
| 3 | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | PANAGHOY SA SUBA | THX GUARANTEED SEATS LASTIKMAN 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30 | GUARANTEED SEATS LASTIKMAN 1:50, 4:15, 6:40, 9:05, 11:30 | SIGAW |
| 4 | ENTENG KABISOTE | HAPPY TOGETHER | HAPPY TOGETHER | GUARANTEED SEATS AISHITE IMASU 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 | HAPPY TOGETHER |
| 5 | MANO PO 3 | | PANAGHOY SA SUBA | GUARANTEED SEATS SIGAW 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30 | MANO PO 3 |
| 6 | | | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | | |
| 7 | | | ENTENG KABISOTE | | |

| | GB1 GREENBELT 1 |
|---|---|
| 1 | PANAGHOY SA SUBA 11:30, 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30 |
| 2 | HAPPY TOGETHER 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:30 |

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| | |
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| December 27 4:00 PM<br>Glorietta 4 cinema lobby | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS |
| December 28 4:00 PM<br>Glorietta 1 cinema lobby | ENTENG KABISOTE |
| December 30 12:00 NN<br>Market! Market! | LASTIKMAN |
| December 30 2:00 PM<br>Glorietta 4 cinema lobby | LASTIKMAN |

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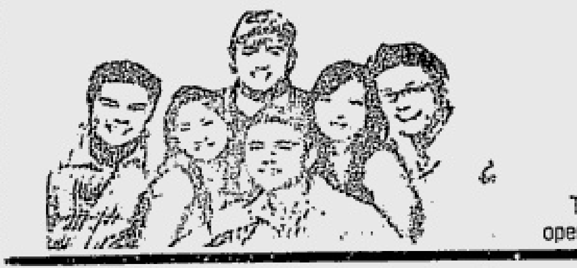

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# Hopeful prospects for 2005

**VIEWFINDER**

*Nestor U. Torre*

HOW ARE our entertainment prospects for 2005 shaping up? Some hopeful prospects:

At the very start of the year, on Jan. 1, start the year on a bright, colorful note by catching the Parade of Roses on TV. Every year, this floral extravaganza dazzles viewers with its creativity and variety, and this year's edition should be another inspiring stunner.

Then, on Jan. 19, the fourth year of "American Idol" unreels by satellite on Star World. The three-month singing search has acquired a huge following in the Philippines, thanks to the fact that two of its finalists in 2004 (**Jasmine Trias** and **Camile Velasco**) were Fil-Am talents.

Everyone here hopes, of course, that Fil-Am singers will again figure strongly in the 2005 tilt, perhaps doing even better than Jasmine's third-place finish. What about winning the top prize this time around?

That'll take some doing, of course, especially since text-voting plays such a big part in the tilts selection process. But Filipinos in the States can be depended on to support "our" best bet, so things are looking up for Fil-Am talents on the new edition of "American Idol."

In this connection, we recently watched a musical special in which the stars were the tilt's top winners during its first three years of existence—**Kelly Clarkson, Ruben Studdard** and **Fantasia Barino**.

Kelly is the biggest star of the three, but she didn't shine brightly enough during the musical special. Perhaps her success had gotten to her? Whatever the reason, her performance was rather listless. The talent and exceptional voice were clearly evident, but the impact of her performance was blunted by her rather smug attitude.

Ruben did better, and even bowled the audience over with some of his innovative stylings of famous songs. But the best impression was made by Fantasia, who sang as if her life depended on it.

If she keeps working hard and doesn't take her success for granted, Fantasia could become a major talent on both the live performance and recording scenes.

Finally, February 2005 will see the staging of the First Cinemalaya Alternative Film Festival and Competition at the CCP. A special project of the Film Development Council of the Philippines, the Cultural Center and the UP Film Institute, the festival seeks to give breaks to some 20 new filmmakers, by way of showcases and production grants.

Also, take note of the fact that January 2005 will see the start of classes of new Asia Pacific Film Institute, which seeks to teach professional filmmaking to students from all over the region.

The brainchild of **Marilou Diaz-Abaya** and **Ben Yalung**, the institute will hold classes at the CineColor film studios and laboratory, where the students will get to do hands-on work with 35-man color equipment and facilities, under the tutelage of active industry professionals.

## 'The Romance of Magno Rubio'

GOOD news: "The Romance of Magno Rubio" has been cited by Chicago critic **Chris Jones** as one of the 10 best theater productions staged in Chicago in 2004. His take on the play, which was initially mounted by the Ma-Yi theater company in New York:

"'The Romance of Magno Rubio, at the Victory Gardens theater. The high priest of multicultural hip-hop, **Lonnie Carter**, brought his uber-theatricality to a movingly simple story of Filipino migrant workers scratching their way toward love and self-worth."

"Magno Rubio" keeps fine company in the Top 10 list, which includes: "A Delicate Balance," "Equus," "Free Man of Color," "Hamlet," "I Never Sang For My Father," "The Light in the Piazza," "Sweeny Todd," "Trying," and "Yellowman."

Most of the titles cited are theater classics, so for "Magno Rubio" to be honored along with them is a great honor, indeed.

More good news: "Magno Rubio" will be staged next at the well-regarded long Wharf Theater in New Haven, CT., this coming March and April.

Ma-Yi's executive director, **Jorge Ortoll**, shares, "We hope more regional theaters pick the play up for their 2005-2006 season." We second the motion, Jorge, and congratulations all around!

THANKS to Jasmine Trias (left) and Camile Velasco, 'AI' has acquired a huge following in the Philippines.

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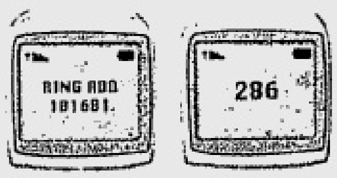

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| Pops Fernandez with Freestyle | Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang | 101665 |
| Gladys & The Boxers | Sasakyan Kita | 100223 |
| Ogie Alcasid | Ikaw Sana | 101658 |
| Sarah Geronimo | Sa Iyo | 100134 |
| Regine Velasquez | Forevermore | 101679 |
| Jennylyn Mercado | Kahit Sandali | 101454 |
| Viva Hot Babes | Bulaklak | 100137 |
| Sarah Geronimo | Forever's Not Enough | 101671 |
| Sarah Geronimo | If Only | 101672 |
| Viva Hot Babes | Kikay | 101259 |
| Agot Isidro | Beginning Today | 100855 |
| Freestyle | Before I Let You Go | 100044 |
| Freestyle | So Slow | 100045 |
| Freestyle | Once In a Lifetime | 101441 |
| Ogie Alcasid & Regine Velasquez | Hanggang Ngayon | 101655 |
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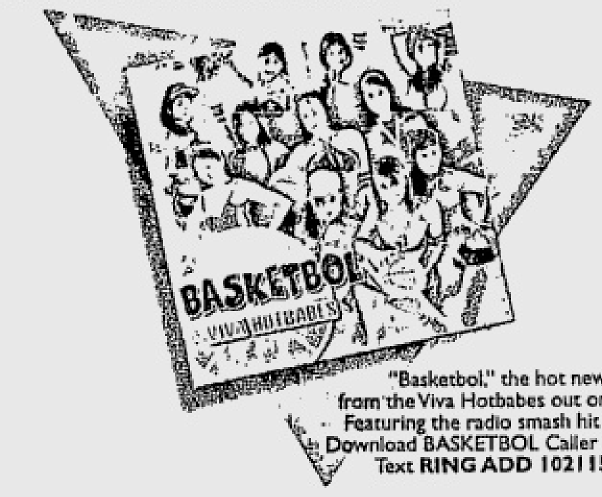

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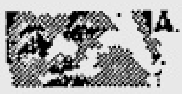
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| Rivermaya | Balisong | BALISONG |
| Freestyle | Before I Let You Go | B4ILETUGO |
| Viva Hotbabes | Bulaklak | BULAKLAK |
| Sarah Geronimo | Ibulong sa Hangin | IBULONG |
| Sarah Geronimo | Just Believe | JUSBELIV |
| Raymond Manalo | Kung Alam Ko Lang | ALAMKO |
| Rivermaya | Liwanag Sa Dilim | LIWANAG |
| Salbakuta | Long Distance | LONGDISTANCE |
| Ogie Alcasid | Minsan Ka Lang | MINSANKA |
| Sarah Geronimo | Sa Iyo | SAIYO |
| Gladys & The Boxers | Sasakyan Kita | SAKYANKITA |
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# Consumer confidence weakens sharply

## BSP survey says expectations for 2005 also pessimistic

By Doris C. Dumlao

**CONSUMER confidence weakened sharply this quarter, defying the usually upbeat Christmas season, due to rising commodity prices and deteriorating household income.**

This was the highlight of the latest Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas survey on consumer expectations.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said that based on the agency's survey for the fourth quarter, the diffusion index of 2,425 households in Metro Manila fell to -49.1 from -40.5 percent in the previous survey.

The DI is the difference between the share of households which answered in the affirmative and those which replied in the negative for a given indicator. The negative index on consumer expectations indicated an unfavorable view.

About 57 percent of the sample households rated their economic situation as "worse," 35 percent "stable" and only 8 percent felt "better" now compared to a year ago.

"The major concerns of respondents with negative expectations were high prices of commodities, no increase in wages, no work and decrease in income," Buenaventura said.

On the other hand, the minority which shared positive expectations anticipated increases in domestic and overseas income, wages and employment.

The consumer expectations index for the next quarter also turned worse to -20.5 percent from -8.1 percent in the previous survey.

"The decline in the next-quarter expectations showed a continuing drop in respondents' expectations on the economic conditions of the country and family financial situation," Buenaventura said.

The outlook for the next 12 months likewise worsened, with the diffusion index turning to -16.7 percent from a positive 7.6 percent in the previous survey.

About 41.5 percent of the respondents expected their situation to remain stable in the year ahead while 37.6 percent expected worse situation. Only 20.9

CONSUMER/ B2

## INDICATORS

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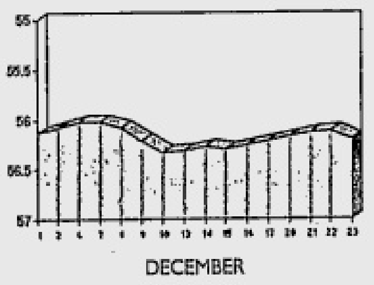

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¥ 104.21 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 23, 2004

GOLD: $441.80-442.30
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### STOCK MARKET

## Quiet week for stocks seen

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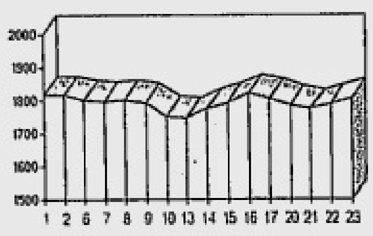


(See stock market report on Page B2)

THE STOCK market is expected to be "fairly quiet" for the holiday-shortened week.

"Vacationing investors ignored the signing of the bill on the indexation of sin taxes into law, the improvement in the tax collection of the Bureau of Internal Revenue for November and the focus on the value-added tax bill and the dropping of the telco franchise tax and petroleum excise taxes by regulators," an analyst from a local brokerage firm said.

"There are no major market-moving news for this week and no economic indicators scheduled for release. The Phisix is trading within a range and should continue to trade within this range (this) week," the analyst added.

However, Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities, said "momentum and last-minute window dressing may help the market have a positive bias for the final two trading sessions of the year."

He added that gains may be smaller as the index is seen to trade between 1,740 and 1,830. Last week, the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index ended flat, adding 1.16 points or 0.06 percent to close at 1,807.49 last Thursday.

BPI Trade said that at the start of trading last week, investors were cautious ahead of former action star Fernando Poe Jr.'s funeral rites.

"With no untoward incident in yesterday's event, investors gained more confidence to accumulate select stocks," BPI Trade noted.

*Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

# Gov't seeks scrapping of more tax perks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has widened the coverage of the bill that seeks to rationalize fiscal incentives, pushing for the withdrawal of more duty and tax perks granted under several special laws.

The DOF was originally seeking the lifting of incentives granted under 26 special laws, but has increased the number to 40.

According to a ranking finance official, the government stands to collect P11.25 billion in additional revenue a year from the revised proposal, compared with the P8-billion potential revenue from the original version.

Incentives that will be lifted under the original draft bill of the DOF were those granted to activities related to seed and dairy production, aquatic and fisheries, book publication, cooperatives, folk arts, telecommunications, non-stock lending, exports, campus journalism, invention, and shipping, among others.

Institutions and organizations whose fiscal incentives were also suggested to be withdrawn under the original bill would include the National Museum, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Philippine Sports Commission, and the National Youth Commission.

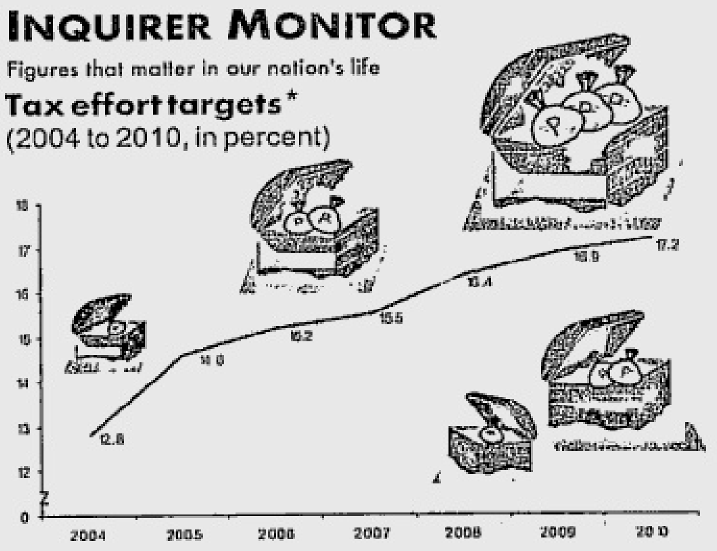
With the new draft bill, the DOF wants to withdraw the fiscal incen-

GOV'T/ B2

## INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

**Tax effort targets***
(2004 to 2010, in percent)



*Ratio to gross domestic product
Source: Medium-Term Development Plan: 2004-2010

THE GOVERNMENT is determined to put its fiscal house in order because it knows it cannot go on subsisting on borrowed funds. Among the measures it plans to adopt are the periodic adjustment of fees and charges to ensure cost-recovery; privatization of National Power Corp.; exploration and development of more oil and gas wells; launch of nationwide reforestation programs; and improvements in enforcement mechanisms to increase efficiency.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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# Can we implement the MTPDP?

**NO FREE LUNCH**

*Cielito F. Habito*

WE OFTEN hear the lament that we Filipinos are so good at planning and consistently come up with impressive plans and blueprints for development—but it is in their implementation that we fail. I recently received my personal copy of the new Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) covering the period 2004-2010, which was formally launched by the government a few weeks ago. My friend Secretary Emy Boncodin of DBM describes it as one that improves on previous MTPDPs by being more focused and clear-cut on what it wants to achieve. She should know; it is her task to translate the plan into the annual national budgets over the next six years. And here lies a key factor that determines whether the new development blueprint will in fact be faithfully implemented. To many, the key to a plan's implementation is in ensuring that budgetary resources are allocated in accordance with it.

## Actions on the ground

To the common Filipino, faithful implementation of the MTPDP should translate to a definite improvement in their lives. As Neda chief in the 1990s, I used to tell my audiences that the measure of whether the MTPDP was successfully implemented was in how many of the following and similar questions could be answered by the common people in the affirmative by the end of the plan period: Are they able to find adequate work and livelihood? Are they able to have proper nutrition and good health? Can they access and afford health care services when they need it? Are their children able to go to school and obtain good quality education? Is water and electricity available in their homes 24 hours a day? Is it easy to travel to and from work, or to transport one's products to the market? And so on.

Delivering these outcomes requires public investments in tangible projects, in the form of physical and social infrastructure (roads, ports, schools, health centers and hospitals), public services (garbage collection, mass transport, disaster management) and good governance (efficient and reliable law enforcement, a fair justice system, participative policymaking, effective regulatory systems). Thus, a vital companion to the MTPDP is the Medium-Term Public Investment Program (MTPIP), which I like to describe as the translation of the plan to actions on the ground, and which would ultimately help get a "yes" answer to the above questions. The inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee further translates the MTPIP into the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) that directly determines the shape of the annual budgets over the plan duration.

## Upset by pork barrel

All these entail an involved process of consultation with the various concerned departments and agencies of government, and a rigorous prioritization of specific programs and projects on the basis of economic, social, political and practical (e.g. fund availability from external donors) criteria—not necessarily in that order of importance. It also entails the rigid evaluation of individual projects by the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) and the Neda sector staffs who provide the ICC's technical secretariat support. One can thus say with confidence that the allocation of funds to various public investments in the DBCC-endorsed budget has a solid basis.

It is this rigorous process of allocating government's extremely scarce resources that gets set aside when politicians take liberties with the proposed national budget submitted by the President, and make reallocations based on purely political considerations. That is why the pork barrel system is seen to be inconsistent with sound public investment programming and budget prioritization. To be fair, the Constitution does give the power over the purse to Congress, as elected representatives of the people. In the 1990s, I sought to address this issue by inviting legislators to participate in the MTPIP formulation process. This way, they would have greater ownership of the budget as submitted by the President. Still, that did not stop many legislators from introducing congressional insertions and appropriating large amounts for their individual discretion. If we truly believe in the MTPDP and would like it to be faithfully implemented, then the pork barrel system will have to be done away with.

## Ownership is key

I had been quoted as having "criticized" the new MTPDP upon its release for its lack of consultation, compared to previous plans—something that was conceded to but defended by some government economic officials, including Neda Secretary Romulo Neri himself. My observation (it was not meant to be a criticism) was well meaning. I was proceeding from the premise that a well-consulted development plan will also find wide ownership among the people, and will therefore benefit from wider support and participation in its implementation. A development plan must have a proper balance of "top-down" and "bottom-up" elements in its formulation to be successful, particularly in its implementation. The 1990s MTPDP was such a plan, which benefited from strong participation by civil society through NGOs and people's organizations (POs) and by the business sector in its formulation. As such, they also had great stake in ensuring its implementation, not only through advocacy but also through direct actions of their own in partnership with government. While it did not and could not possibly make everybody happy, we were able to achieve a healthy tri-sectoral partnership that was highly instrumental in the country's dynamic performance in the '90s. We cannot afford to make the NGOs and POs feel alienated and excluded from the Plan, as many now seem to feel with what they see (fairly or unfairly) as insensitive policies being rammed through by the government. Otherwise, we risk having a significant segment of society actually obstruct implementation of the Plan, no matter how clear and focused—but narrowly supported—it may be.

And if this prevents us from implementing it faithfully, the MTPDP will end up being what it sounds like: an "empty" PDP. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

# Gov't seeks scrapping . . .

From page B1

tives of more activities and sectors, including the following: Commission on Elections, importation by television and radio broadcasting stations, rural banks, port organization, electric cooperatives, and scientific and technological research, among others.

The bill being pushed by the Department of Finance is part of the Arroyo administration's plan to rationalize fiscal incentives, which is aimed at arresting huge revenue losses.

Aside from the DOF's bill that seeks to reduce fiscal incentives granted under special laws, the rationalization plan also calls for the scrapping of some incentives granted by the Board of Investments.

In 2003 alone, the government lost the opportunity to collect P340 billion in revenue due to fiscal incentives.

Aside from the withdrawal of the fiscal incentives granted by special laws and those given to BOI-registered firms, the rationalization plan also includes the lifting of value-added tax exemptions of several products and services.

The proposal to lift VAT exemptions, including those of petroleum products and of services rendered by doctors and lawyers, is expected to generate P28 billion in additional revenue a year.

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# CAP in talks on new loan

COLLEGE Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) is in talks with a US-based investor who may provide the embattled pre-need firm up to $300 million in loan.

The proposed loan has a repayment term of 10 years with a grace period being negotiated for the principal amount and interest.

CAP is in the process of seeking clearance from the Securities and Exchange (SEC) for the proposed loan, SEC Chair Fe Barin said.

United Gains, led by its spokesperson Jay Baron Alzate, has met with the SEC as the representative of the unnamed US investor.

CAP earlier drew from its cash deposit with Philippine Veterans Bank to pay P20 million in tuition liabilities to plan holders. CAP has already submitted to the SEC its list of schools and plan holders who received the money. CAP is now preparing to draw down another P20 million.

The SEC earlier allowed CAP to pay its plan holders using its trust fund. CAP could draw P110 million from its cash deposit with Veterans Bank in tranches.

CAP would substitute the amount to be withdrawn with bonds of the Metro Rail Transit to keep intact its trust fund at the Veterans Bank.
*Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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(As of December 23, 2004)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES | | | | | |
| BANKS | | | | | |
| Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc. | 2.95 | 2.95 | 2.95 | 2.95 | 2,000 |
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 26.5 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 26.5 | 28,000 |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 51.5 | 51.5 | 51 | 51.5 | 1,517,200 |
| China Banking Corp. | 575 | 575 | 575 | 575 | 120 |
| Citystate Savings Bank | 17.25 | 17.25 | 17.25 | 17.25 | 1,000 |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 46 | 49 | 46 | 48.5 | 91,200 |
| Export and Ind. Bank Inc. | 0.42 | 0.42 | 0.42 | 0.42 | 340,000 |
| International Exch. Bank | 16.75 | 16.75 | 16.75 | 16.75 | 243,400 |
| Metropolitan Bank & Trust | 27 | 27.5 | 27 | 27 | 99,400 |
| Rizal Comm. Banking Corp. | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 5,000 |
| Security Bank Corp. | 27.5 | 27.5 | 27.5 | 27.5 | 2,900 |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 23.5 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 23.5 | 6,300 |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES | | | | | |
| Bankard Inc. | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 60,000 |
| Manulife Financial Corp. | 2485 | 2485 | 2480 | 2480 | 70 |
| PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc. | 1.36 | 1.36 | 1.36 | 1.36 | 100,000 |
| Phil. Stock Exchange Inc. | 110 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 50 |
| Sun Life Financial Inc. | 1815 | 1825 | 1815 | 1825 | 1,640 |
| COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL | | | | | |
| COMMUNICATION | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18.5 | 18,000 |
| Digital Telecom Phils Inc. | 1.7 | 1.74 | 1.7 | 1.74 | 8,691,000 |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 955 | 965 | 955 | 960 | 14,750 |
| Ipeople Inc. | 2.9 | 3 | 2.85 | 3 | 524,000 |
| Island Info and Tech Inc. | 0.044 | 0.05 | 0.044 | 0.048 | 5,600,000 |
| Ism Communications Corp. | 0.033 | 0.034 | 0.033 | 0.034 | 700,000 |
| Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp. | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 39,000 |
| Mla. Broadcasting Co. | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 10,000 |
| Pilipino Tel. Corp. | 2.48 | 2.55 | 2.48 | 2.5 | 7,692,000 |
| Phil. Long Dis Tel Co. | 1315 | 1340 | 1315 | 1320 | 76,900 |
| Ivantage Corp. | 0.69 | 0.69 | 0.68 | 0.68 | 600,000 |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.01 | 0.011 | 0.01 | 0.011 | 6,200,000 |
| POWER & ENERGY | | | | | |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 15.75 | 15.75 | 15.75 | 15.75 | 300 |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 228,700 |
| Petron Corp. | 3.15 | 3.25 | 3.15 | 3.2 | 3,042,000 |
| TRANSPORTATION SERVICES | | | | | |
| Int'l Container Term'l Sv | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 56,000 |
| Lorenzo Shipping Corp. | 1.18 | 1.18 | 1.18 | 1.18 | 204,000 |
| CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS | | | | | |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.36 | 100,000 |
| Fortune Cement Corp. | 0.53 | 0.53 | 0.53 | 0.53 | 50,000 |
| Republic Glass Hldg. Corp. | 1.72 | 1.72 | 1.72 | 1.72 | 652,000 |
| Union Cement Corp. | 1.96 | 1.98 | 1.92 | 1.96 | 821,000 |
| FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO | | | | | |
| Ginebra San Miguel Inc. | 31 | 31 | 30.5 | 30.5 | 1,000 |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 28 | 29 | 28 | 29 | 545,100 |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 58 | 59 | 58 | 59 | 144,900 |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 75 | 75 | 74 | 74 | 9,700 |
| Vitarich Corp. | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 1,000,000 |
| HOLDING FIRMS | | | | | |
| Abacus Con Res & Hdg A | 0.005 | 0.005 | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 141,000,000 |
| Ayala Corp. | 6.5 | 6.6 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 11,378,000 |
| Aboitiz Equity Ventures | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 1,216,000 |
| A. Soriano Corp. | 1.58 | 1.58 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 9,000 |
| APC Group Inc. | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 1,900,000 |
| ATN Holdings Inc. | 1.68 | 1.68 | 1.68 | 1.68 | 55,000 |
| Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc. | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 11,600 |
| Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.1 | 0.105 | 0.1 | 0.105 | 1,450,000 |
| Benpres Holdings Corp. | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 2,810,000 |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.215 | 0.215 | 0.215 | 0.215 | 80,000 |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.11 | 0.11 | 1,000,000 |
| DMCI Holdings Inc. | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 1,361,000 |
| Ever-Gotesco Resources | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 500,000 |
| Filinvest Dev. Corp. | 1 | 1.02 | 1 | 1.02 | 260,000 |
| Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp. | 4.65 | 4.75 | 4.65 | 4.7 | 667,000 |
| First Phil Hldgs Corp. | 30.5 | 31 | 30.5 | 30.5 | 475,600 |
| Macroasia Corp. | 2.44 | 2.55 | 2.4 | 2.46 | 5,296,000 |
| Marsteel Cons. Inc. B | 0.015 | 0.015 | 0.015 | 0.015 | 1,000,000 |
| Megaworld Corp. | 1.24 | 1.26 | 1.24 | 1.26 | 2,007,000 |
| Metro Pacific Corp. | 0.33 | 0.33 | 0.31 | 0.32 | 20,930,000 |
| Prime Media Holdings Inc. | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 20,000 |
| East Asia Power Res. Corp. | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.145 | 100,000 |
| Roxas Holdings Inc. | 0.83 | 0.85 | 0.83 | 0.85 | 170,000 |
| Uniwide Holdings Inc. | 0.135 | 0.135 | 0.135 | 0.135 | 500,000 |
| Wellex Industries Inc. | 0.16 | 0.17 | 0.16 | 0.17 | 140,000 |
| MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING | | | | | |
| Music Semiconductors Corp. | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 3,000 |
| HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES | | | | | |
| Belle Corp. | 0.61 | 0.61 | 0.61 | 0.61 | 1,470,000 |
| Acesite Phils Hotel Corp. | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 800 |
| Fairmont Holdings Inc. | 1.08 | 1.08 | 1 | 1.04 | 3,738,000 |
| Leisure & Resorts Corp. | 0.57 | 0.57 | 0.57 | 0.57 | 90,000 |
| Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc. | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.28 | 0.28 | 830,000 |
| Philippine Racing Club | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 14,000 |
| BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS | | | | | |
| ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr) | 18.75 | 18.75 | 18.5 | 18.75 | 437,000 |
| Macroasia Corp. Warrants | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 50,000 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series R | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 1,000 |
| PLDT (10% Pref) Series S | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 10.25 | 1,000 |
| OTHERS | | | | | |
| Centro Escolar University | 8.5 | 9 | 8.5 | 8.9 | 236,000 |
| PROPERTY | | | | | |
| Ayala Land Inc. | 7 | 7.1 | 7 | 7.1 | 3,903,000 |
| C&P Homes Inc. | 0.235 | 0.235 | 0.225 | 0.23 | 5,820,000 |
| Cyber Bay Corp. | 0.145 | 0.145 | 0.135 | 0.135 | 1,590,000 |
| Empire East Land Inc. | 0.34 | 0.34 | 0.34 | 0.34 | 850,000 |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.1 | 1.16 | 1.1 | 1.14 | 8,723,000 |
| Fil-Estate Land Inc. | 0.51 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 590,000 |
| Robinsons Land Corp. | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 40,000 |
| Phil Realty and Holdings | 0.19 | 0.2 | 0.19 | 0.2 | 120,000 |
| SM Development Corp. | 1.4 | 1.42 | 1.4 | 1.42 | 1,411,000 |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 7.7 | 7.8 | 7.7 | 7.8 | 9,641,000 |
| MINING | | | | | |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc. A | 0.38 | 0.39 | 0.38 | 0.39 | 100,000 |
| Apex Mining Co. Inc.B | 0.4 | 0.42 | 0.38 | 0.4 | 330,000 |
| Abra Mining & Industrial | 0.011 | 0.012 | 0.011 | 0.012 | 84,500,000 |
| Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't | 3.85 | 3.85 | 3.75 | 3.75 | 4,000 |
| Benguet Corp. A | 3.25 | 3.4 | 3.25 | 3.4 | 56,000 |
| Dizon Copper Silver Mines | 3.45 | 3.45 | 3.45 | 3.45 | 3,000 |
| Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A | 0.35 | 0.37 | 0.34 | 0.35 | 62,090,000 |
| Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B | 0.45 | 0.46 | 0.43 | 0.43 | 45,560,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. A | 0.019 | 0.019 | 0.019 | 0.019 | 399,300,000 |
| Manila Mining Corp. B | 0.027 | 0.027 | 0.027 | 0.027 | 257,400,000 |
| Omico Corp. | 0.0046 | 0.0048 | 0.0046 | 0.0046 | 128,000,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. A | 0.67 | 0.7 | 0.67 | 0.69 | 5,730,000 |
| Philex Mining Corp. B | 0.71 | 0.75 | 0.71 | 0.75 | 13,780,000 |
| United Paragon Mining Co. | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 800,000 |
| OIL | | | | | |
| Interport Res. B | 0.0034 | 0.0034 | 0.0034 | 0.0034 | 25,000,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. A | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 11,000,000 |
| Oriental Pet. & Min. B | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 0.0048 | 30,000,000 |
| The Philodrill Corp. A | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 280,000 |
| Petroenergy Res. Corp. | 2.3 | 2.34 | 2.3 | 2.34 | 39,000 |
| Sinophil Corp. | 0.045 | 0.055 | 0.045 | 0.048 | 48,900,000 |
| Vulcan Ind'l | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.25 | 520,000 |

## CURRENCIES

| December 23, 2004<br>Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.746882 | 1.000000 | 56.1440 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.007169 | 0.009598 | 0.5389 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.430055 | 1.914700 | 107.4989 |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 0.095983 | 0.128512 | 7.2152 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.647941 | 0.867528 | 48.7065 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.601742 | 0.805672 | 45.2336 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.455555 | 0.609942 | 34.2446 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.572191 | 0.766107 | 43.0123 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 1.981224 | 2.652661 | 148.9310 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.199163 | 0.266660 | 14.9714 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.454170 | 0.608088 | 34.1405 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000080 | 0.000107 | 0.0060 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.019128 | 0.025611 | 1.4379 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.203377 | 0.272301 | 15.2881 |
| Euro | Euro | 1.000000 | 1.338900 | 75.1712 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.252197 | 0.337667 | 18.9580 |
| Brazil | Real | 0.276213 | 0.369822 | 20.7633 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134510 | 0.180096 | 10.1113 |
| India | Rupee | 0.017056 | 0.022836 | 1.2821 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.196574 | 0.263193 | 14.7767 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.067039 | 0.089759 | 5.0394 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.532460 | 0.712911 | 40.0257 |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.132247 | 0.177066 | 9.9412 |
| Korea | Won | 0.000710 | 0.000950 | 0.0533 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.023152 | 0.030998 | 1.7404 |

# Consumer confidence . . .

From page B1

percent expected some improvement in the next 12 months.

Family income was expected to decline this quarter but recover starting the first quarter of 2005.

Family expenditures for basic commodities were likewise expected to rise by an average of 6.2 percent in the first quarter of 2005 compared to the previous quarter, with food and electric bills fueling the increase.

"With these trends in consumer spending and income, the growth rate in personal consumption expenditures could increase modestly in the first quarter of 2005," he said.

But Buenaventura noted that respondents were more cautious in their purchases of assets this quarter, as the buying conditions index declined to 20.4 percent from 27.1 percent in the previous survey.

"The growing cautiousness in consumer spending for assets could indicate a slowdown or even a possible decline in the volume of sales of appliances, cars and residential houses," Buenaventura said.

The survey showed that consumers were expecting higher unemployment and interest rates as well as a peso depreciation in the next 12 months.

Compared to the previous survey, however, a slightly lower inflation was expected during this quarter. The highest price increases were seen to come from electric bills, fish and seafood, meat and rice.

The consumer expectations survey was conducted last October 1-7. The results reflected the separate business outlook survey conducted by the BSP for roughly the same period.

Based on the BSP's business outlook survey, business confidence deteriorated this quarter primarily due to skyrocketing oil prices.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY DATA

# Philippine exports seen to reach $50B in 2006

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PHILIPPINE exports are expected to reach $50 billion within two years, buoyed up by bright prospects in the mining and information technology sectors, the firming up of a trade pact with Japan and the implementation of key infrastructure projects, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

DTI data showed that renewed investor interest in mining would benefit downstream industries such as the businesses in jewelry, semiconductors and mineral processing.

The improve situation is attributed to the Supreme Court's Dec. 1 ruling that again allowed foreign companies to engage in the local mining sector.

The continued headway in IT and IT-enabled services, and the medical tourism and wellness services sectors is also seen to boost export earnings. A bright outlook in automotive parts manufacturing and food sectors would also push up revenues.

Latest data from the National Statistics Office show that earnings from merchandise exports for the first nine months of 2004 stood at $28.9 billion, an increase of 8.5 percent from $26.6 billion posted in the same period last year.

Electronic products valued at $193 billion remained the top export earner with 66.7-percent share of the total revenues in the first three quarters, up 9.4 percent from $17.6 billion in the year-ago period.

Earlier this month, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said the country's export performance in 2005 is projected to reach double-digit growth and outperform the 2004 export record.

Purisima said the business environment for exports would be more conducive in 2005, which would pave the way for further acceleration in the coming years.

He said bilateral agreements, favorable laws for business, increased investments in the export sector, and an improved export plan in the next five years would further strengthen the country's international trading position.

He said that by next year, the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement would be put in place, increasing export activities between the two countries.

"With the lifting of trade barriers, Philippine products will have easier access to the Japanese market. It will also enable Japan to overtake the United States as (RP's) No. 1 export market."

The trade chief is also optimistic that the country will achieve its 10-percent export growth target for this year.

# Singapore air carriers press for added fees

By Clarissa S. Batino

SINGAPORE Airlines and Silk Air have filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board new petitions for additional fuel surcharge of $3 on short flights and $10 on long trips.

The two carriers based in Singapore two weeks ago received the CAB approval to impose an additional fuel surcharge of $2 on short flights and $7 on long trips.

A fuel surcharge is added to the ticket price and should be removed once prices of aviation fuel ease. A fare hike is permanent.

Jet fuel accounts for about 30 percent of an airline's operating cost, the second highest expense after labor, according to industry sources. From about $44 per barrel in June, the price of jet fuel had soared past $55 per barrel recently.

Singapore Airlines and Silk Air, in separate petitions, wanted to increase the fuel surcharge to $10 from the current $7 for every one-way trip to and from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and the Philippines.

The two carriers said it wanted to raise the fuel surcharge to $22 from the current $12 for every one-way trip to and from China and India.

The CAB said it had also approved the request of Taiwan's Eva Air for a surcharge increase of $2 to $8.40 per sector from $6.50 per sector or for every one-way trip.

Still pending before the CAB is the petition of Northwest Airlines for a $25 fuel surcharge per sector or for every one-way trip remained under review.

A CAB official said that when the American carrier sought and got the approval in August for its $20 per sector fare hike, the local representatives said Northwest, as a policy, would not ask for a fuel surcharge and just a fare increase.

"The CAB is asking Northwest why it is now asking for a fuel surcharge when it said months ago that the head office only believes in asking for a fare increase," an aviation official said.

The CAB also had not approved the petition of Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific for a third increase in fuel surcharge as well as South Korea's Asiana Airlines petition for a $1 hike.

Cathay Pacific is asking for an additional fuel surcharge of $2.20 on one-way short trips and $8 on long flights.

The CAB had given domestic carriers such as Philippine Airlines, Cebu Air Pacific and Air Philippines Corp. a provisional authority to impose a fuel surcharge of P200 to P400 on domestic flights.

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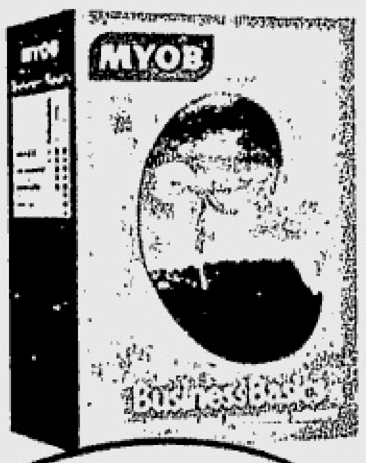

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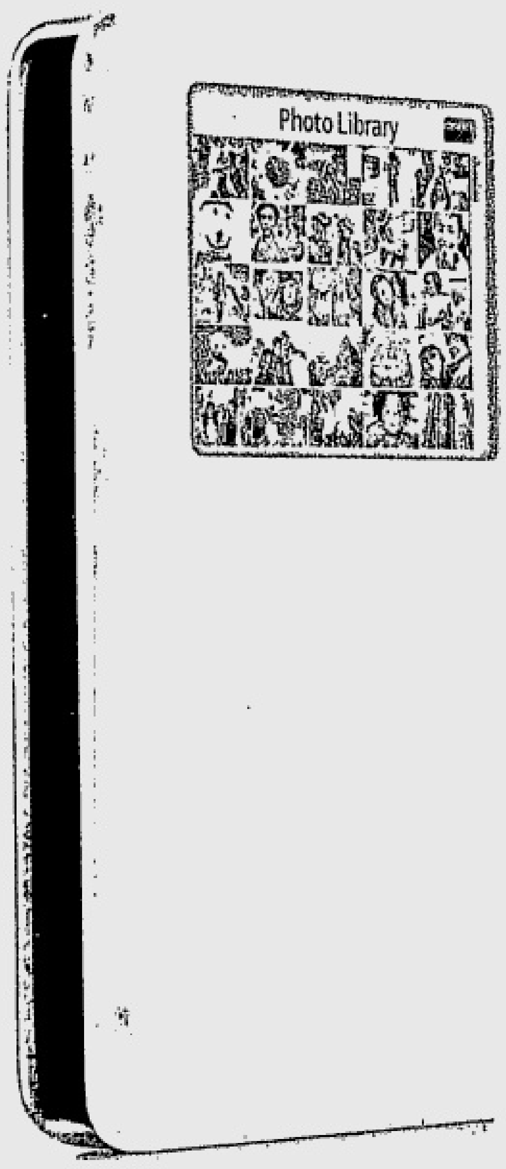

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BUSINESS Monday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

# RP seen as regional business hub by 2006

**By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.**
*PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

TAGAYTAY CITY—Soaring foreign investments in all government-declared economic zones across the country will make the Philippines the next regional business hub in Southeast Asia by year 2006, according to a Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) official.

"And we're now getting close to it," Elmer San Pascual, Peza Investment and Promotions Department manager, said with confidence during the recent roundtable discussion with the INQUIRER held at the Viewsite Restaurant in this city.

San Pascual also cited the prediction of the Political and Economic Consultancy Risk Ltd. based in Hong Kong in 2001 that the Philippines would be allied with Hong Kong and Singapore as the upcoming regional business hub by year 2006.

The Peza official said total investments in the economic zones in the first 10 months of this year alone already reached P35.6 billion.

San Pascual said about 60 percent of the P35.6 billion investments involved expansion projects of existing companies inside the zones.

"And if these locators decided to expand their business in the country rather than repatriate their earnings back home, this only shows their confidence in the Philippine economy as well as in Peza," he boasted.

Japan remains the top foreign investor inside the economic zones, clinching 40 percent of the country's total investments during the period 1995 to 2003.

Filipino investors followed next with 17 percent while the US registered third in the index with 14 percent.

In 1986 to 1994, during the time of the Peza predecessor, the Export Processing Zone Authority, the total investments in economic zones registered only P22.3 billion, San Pascual said.

But during the nine years under Peza, from 1995 to 2003, he claimed that the total economic zone investments became 37 times bigger with a total of P837.6 billion.

In 1994, the total manufactured exports from the economic zones was a measly $2.7 billion. Last year, exports posted a total $27.3 billion.

Economic zone exports in January to September last year registered a total of $19.3 billion. During the same months in the current year, the export index rose to $24.3 billion or a 25.8-percent increase.

## IT sector

The semiconductor and electronics sector still accounted for the huge slice of zone exports as well as investments, posting 56 percent of the total cumulative investments in the products sector during the 1995-2003 period.

It was followed by the electrical machinery sector, which registered a far 12 percent of foreign investment index.

He said Peza opened the information technology (IT) sector only in late 1999 but it now constitutes 3 percent of the total foreign investments inside the industrial zones.

"The growth of the IT sector is tremendous, especially among call centers. In Metro Manila, we now have 21 IT centers, IT parks and buildings, four in Cebu and one in Laguna," San Pascual noted.

"Almost all foreign IT companies are already here, while a number of them are still coming in," he added.

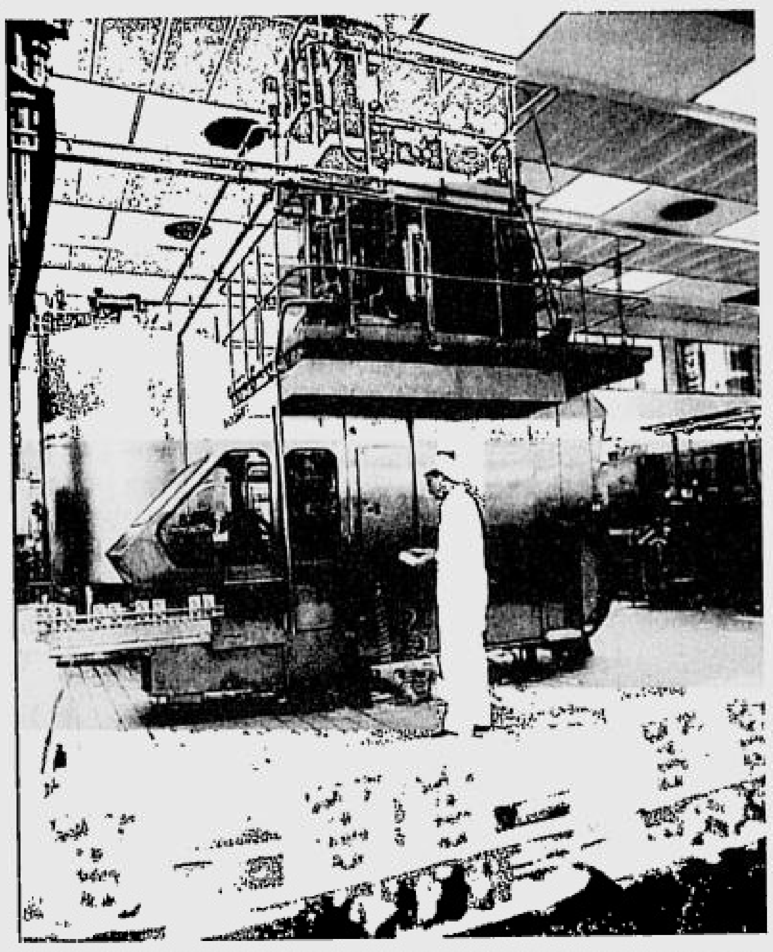
He said the Philippines has been able to attract big call center companies from the US owing to the "very competitive Filipino workforce."

"They are literate, English-speaking, easy to train, hardworking and very friendly," he said.

He also attributed the influx of investors in the telecommunications sector to the deregulation of the industry.

A Peza pamphlet described the Filipino workers in the IT service sector as the "new breed of world-class service professionals and are referred to as 'global knowledge workers' because they are intelligent and able to compete at the highest levels among the best in the world."

But San Pascual warned that in five years' time, the vast Chinese manpower pool could also have a big chunk of the employment opportunities owing to its government's present thrust of transforming its growing labor force into an English language-literate army of workers.


**PEZA officials optimistic about getting more investments in the zone.**

"Three years ago, the Chinese government had required the teaching of English even in elementary. It's no longer exclusive to college level," he said.

## Garments lag

Garment products, the former centerpiece of Philippine exports, was below the investment chart—posting only one percent, way below its former record in the '70s and early '80s when the sector usually registered 70 to 80 percent of the country's total foreign investment portfolio.

"Our former foreign garment manufacturers have now gone to Laos, Vietnam, Bangladesh and China," San Pascual noted.

The Peza official said they would soon open a new field of investment—tourism economic zone.

San Pascual said they had already approved four tourism economic zones, which are all waiting to be officially declared by Malacañang.

He cited Panglao Island in Bohol province as one of the proposed tourism economic zones.

The Peza will also promote the country as a "medical tourism area," the official said. "We will be ready to come out with a particular policy sometime next year so that we will be able to compete with Thailand."

## Peza's role

San Pascual said the Peza assists in the national effort to create employment opportunities, generate foreign exchange and encourage the dispersal of economic activities in the countryside through the establishment of special economic zones.

It was created under Republic Act. No. 7916, known as the "Special Economic Zone Act of 1995."

The Peza supervises the operation of economic zones throughout the country. It is also responsible for the grant of fiscal incentives available to investors locating inside a declared industrial area as well as to developers/operators of the economic sites. All projects registered with Peza are required to be export-oriented to be able to avail of tax and fiscal incentives, according to San Pascual.

He advised prospective economic zone developers to also secure clearances from the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Agrarian Reform before the approval of their application as special economic zone.

Inside the Calabarzon area, the minimum land area for privately owned economic zone is 25 hectares, while outside of the region, the Peza requires a minimum of 50 hectares. "The trend now is private sector-led economic zones. They also enjoy their own sets of incentives," San Pascual said.

He said most companies prefer to locate in economic zones because of the investment perks that include tax and duty-free importation of capital equipment, income tax holiday, and a 5-percent tax on gross income in lieu of all taxes, among others. In 1999, the number of companies inside the export processing zones was less than 300, scattered in at least 16 economic zones located in different strategic parts of the country.

As of October this year, Peza maintains a total of 67 operating economic zones all over the country—all serving as hosts to at least 1,232 foreign companies.

Four of these zones are government-owned.

"We are considered as an investment promotion agency," the Peza official said.

He said there are five other government export and investment promotion agencies aside from Peza.

## Conservative

San Pascual noted, however, that compared to other countries, the Philippines is still "conservative" in granting incentives to foreign investors.

"Malaysia and Thailand are already giving 12-percent tax holiday," he said as he expressed disagreement with the call of the Department of Finance to remove the tax holiday clause in the list of incentives for foreign investors doing business inside the zone.

"If we change our present policy, these foreign companies would immediately pack up and transfer their business elsewhere," he said.

"In China, they are giving their land for free to foreign investors, plus they shoulder the cost of relocating the business. How can we beat that?"

## Employment

Aside from luring foreign investors, Peza has also served as job providers for thousands of Filipino workers.

In 1994, the total workforce in Peza-registered companies was only 229,650.

From January to September this year, total employment rose to 907,127 permanent workers, posting an 11-percent increase from last year's 896,490 number of workers during the same period.

San Pascual said female workers constitute 70 percent of the total workforce of economic zones.

Contrary to the prevailing notion that the bulk of economic zones' workforce is mostly on contractual basis, San Pascual clarified that companies doing business inside the zones had to really invest in the workers' training. "The percentage of contractual employees, at least in the electronics sector, is declining."

"If they (foreign companies) will spend just to train people and fire them after five months, that will be too costly," he said.

San Pascual said economic zone workers received salaries way above the government mandated minimum wage.

"That's why there is no need for them to form a labor union," he said.

In case of labor disputes, he said, the Peza would employ moral suasion on both parties.

However, in case of full-blown labor disputes, he said the Peza would call on other government agencies like the Department of Labor and Employment to help settle the problems.

He lamented that most Filipino officials working for foreign companies "are often the ones pushing their superiors to skirt the country's laws."

San Pascual said the Peza-registered companies also serve as a rich ground for technology transfer.

Young Filipino engineers now design car parts, which are being exported to other countries, San Pascual cited as an example.

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# *New UPI president started career as warehouseman*

UNOCAL Philippines Inc. (UPI) announced the appointment of Antonio F. Yee as president and general manager, effective Jan. 1, 2005.

Yee, 47, is a Filipino who began his career with UPI in 1979 as a warehouseman. Over the past 25 years, he held a series of positions with increasing responsibilities at Unocal geothermal facilities in Indonesia and the United States, including serving most recently as senior vice president and general manager of UPI.

This advancement affirms Unocal's commitment to advancing local employees in its global operations. Currently, 10 out of 13 UPI senior managers and 98 percent of its 416-person workforce are Filipinos who are among the most capable members of the energy industry worldwide.

Barry Andrews, the current president of UPI, will assume the position of chief executive officer.

"Tony's career is an inspiring success story," said Andrews. "He joined UPI in its earliest days. His experience and expertise give him a unique advantage in steering this organization toward becoming one of the leading energy resource and project development companies in the Philippines."

Early in his career at UPI, Yee moved from warehouseman to various positions in production engineering and loss control. In 1992, he was assigned to lead the start-up team for Unocal's Salak geothermal plant in Indonesia. He returned to UPI in 1995 as manager of engineering and construction processes. In 1996, he became the operations manager at UPI's Mak-Ban geothermal steam field. In 1997, he was assigned to Unocal's Geysers geothermal field in Northern California as its asset manager.

Yee returned to UPI as Mak-Ban Asset manager in 1999, leading the project to record-generating performances, and was named senior vice president and general manager in August 2002.

Yee has a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. He completed the executive development program at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University in the United States.

**YEE**

UNOCAL 76
PHILIPPINES

UPI is currently managing a $26-million capital project to enhance the steam field capabilities in both Tiwi and Mak-Ban. The projects include upgrades to facilities and new drilling to ensure the sustained and long-term commercial production of this clean, reliable and affordable energy source. This modernization reflects UPI's commitment to its 33-year partnership with the Philippine government to pioneer geothermal development and meet the growing energy needs of the country.

Unocal Philippines Inc. is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Unocal Corporation, one of the world's leading independent natural gas and crude oil exploration and production companies. The company's principal oil and gas activities are in Asia and North America. Unocal is also one of the world's largest producers of geothermal energy, with operations in the Philippines and Indonesia.

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# Benchmarking: One underutilized management tool

**MAPPING THE FUTURE**

*Augusto L. de Leon*

BENCHMARKING is one management tool that has been underutilized in the management of the public sector.

Take education for example. There is now a great clamor for better education. Lack of funds has always been an excuse for the poor performance of the sector. We now have millions of books printed and purchased for use that have errors in fact and in grammar. Every school year, the number of physical structures (i.e., classrooms) do not match the number of students. At the very least, in our public schools, students do not have chairs to sit on. Year after year, there are reports of a long litany of shortages attributed to the "lack of funds."

Has anyone validated how real or imagined this excuse is? Benchmarking can be used as a powerful tool to evaluate performance. What is the total budget of the Department of Education? How many students are enrolled each year? What is the cost that taxpayers pay for every student in the classroom?

Since the field of education has a rather extensive private sector component, a statistically sound survey can be designed to determine what it costs the private sector to provide a comparable education per student vis-à-vis the public school system. A direct comparison can be made. Since the private educational system has to recover capital investment as well as make a profit to support expansion, the expectation should be that the cost of the private schools should be more than that of the public schools.

The same approach can be made to measure the quality of education. Test scores of students from representative samples of public schools can be compared to those who study in private schools. Again we can better judge if the greater expenditure per student in the public school education is justified in terms of better preparing the students to become productive citizens of the country.

Other comparative benchmark measurements can be made at very nominal cost: comparative salaries of teachers, ratio of money spent for administration and overhead relative to the expenditures for teachers.

A general perception of parents is that their children learn more and are better prepared for life if they go to private schools. The business essence of the private education is that their "customers" are willing to pay for private school tuition costs even if a much less expensive alternative of public education is available. If it is costing the government so much more to educate a student, why not then just give the students a coupon equivalent to the cost of education in a private school so they can choose to get a better education at a lower cost per student to the government? At the present stage of our economic life where the government does not have money to meet the most basic need of the population, new policies and ways of doing things are called for. Having the private educational institutions do the job for less can be one way to cope with the increasing number of students that is entering school age every year.

Franchising has evolved to be a very viable system in the business sector. Why not franchise the operations of public schools to the private sector? By doing so, we can expand the educational service sector with private capital and more cost-effective management. The franchisee will lease from the government the school facilities; take over the use of the assets; absorb the faculty under the employment terms of the private institution. Teachers in government payroll can have a choice if they want to move to the private institution as their employer or be redeployed in the remaining publicly operated schools or take early retirement. The private institution will absorb the student population of the school and will be paid by the government on a per student basis computed at the average cost per student of a predetermined pool of private schools in the community.

As with all transactions involving the government, the issue that has to be resolved is if the franchisee will be paid by government on time so they can meet their financial obligations. This can be better ensured by encouraging the government to deposit the amounts to a government banking institution like the Land Bank. The financial institution may also be used to issue out the coupons to the students. The government in turn will be able to set up a system of control and insure that the franchisee complies with the terms and conditions of the franchise agreement.

Once an alternative system is established, the parents who are the ultimate customers of the public school system will ensure the efficiency of both systems as a more competitive market is created.

Innovation is key to survival. Maybe as we face hard and difficult times, our innovative ingenuity will surface. This is most critical in the field of education because we all know time is a consumable resource. Our school age population cannot wait for better times to prepare themselves for the future. To be a productive member of the next generation, their time is now.

*(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is principal consultant of De Leon Consulting. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)*

# Landbank sees higher returns

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE LAND Bank of the Philippines is set to amend its charter next year and open its doors to new investors.

According to Margarito Teves, Landbank president, this will allow new investments to pour into the bank and widen its asset and loan base to at least P65 billion, which is comparable to that of a commercial bank.

"More or less, multilateral agencies like the World Bank's International Finance Corp. and other countries could possibly be our investors because they have similar mandates like us," Teves said.

By the second quarter of 2006, the Landbank will submit its proposed charter amendments to Congress.

The Land Bank of the Philippines' (Landbank) total loans to the agriculture-agrarian (agri-agra) sector reached P74.8 billion from January to July this year, up 16 percent from P64.3 billion during the same period in 2003.

Teves said the bank was able to achieve its end-2004 target of increasing the share of agri-agra lending to 60 percent of the bank's total loan portfolio five months ahead of schedule.

"Our total loans to our priority sectors already account for 60 percent of our P125 billion total loanable funds, and we were able to do that in just seven months this year," said Teves.

Landbank's priority sectors include farmers and fisherfolk, small and medium enterprises and microenterprises, livelihood projects, agribusiness, agri-infrastructure, agri-related projects and environment-related projects.

Since Teves assumed his post in 2001, the bank had stepped up its aggressive strategy of shifting its loan portfolio in favor of the agri-agra sector. From a 38-percent share in 2001, the priority sectors' share went up 50 percent in 2002 and 56 percent in 2003.

For the first seven months this year, loans for agribusiness snagged the biggest share of 14 percent or P17.8 billion, followed by SMEs (small-to-medium-enterprises) with a 13 percent share at P16.6 billion. Loans to farmers and fisherfolks groups accounted for 12 percent at P15 billion; agri-infrastructure got eight percent at P10.5 billion, while agri-related projects got an 8 percent share at P9.9 billion.

Teves said the loan releases were coursed through more than 900 cooperatives and 300 countryside financial institutions which benefited more than 250,000 small farmers and fisherfolk.

Aside from these loan releases, the bank also extended P11.5 billion in credit and technical assistance under the Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization program.

# The Catholic Church and mining

By Honesto C. General

**QUESTIONS OF POLICIES**

*Honesto C. General*

BISHOP Leonardo Medroso of Borongan, Samar, had very strong words against mining.

In an item ran by the INQUIRER recently, he went as far as to say, "Mining is anti-life."

Filipinos have been mining for centuries. In 1565, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi arrived in Cebu to colonize the islands. One of his royal missions was to search for gold. The Spaniards found that the natives of Aroroy, Masbate, were panning for gold. In 1571, Legazpi's grandson, Juan Salcedo, started the first mining operations in Luzon at Paracale, Camarines Norte.

The Americans brought modern mining technology and large-scale mining to the country. In 1908, gold was discovered in the Mountain Province. This led to the development of Baguio as the summer capital. After extensive exploration, the Americans found other minerals, such as copper and chromite. At one point, there were 54 mining operations all over the country.

The Spaniards shipped all the gold they could find back to Mother Spain. Today, Bangko Sentral buys all the gold we mine. None goes out of the country.

Mining used to account for 25 percent of our Gross Domestic Product. Today, that figure is down to a paltry one and a half percent.

There is no denying that the Americans exploited the country of its mining resources. The so-called parity amendment to the Constitution, which gave the Americans equal rights to our natural resources, was really meant to protect their mining interests.

There is also no denying the damage wrought by mining, especially irresponsible mining, to the environment and to our indigenous brothers.

But the threat to life is exaggerated. The most celebrated disaster was the accidental spillage of mine tailings at Marcopper in Marinduque. How many lives were lost? None. The alleged resultant epidemic was proven to be false. Now, irresponsible mining and illegal logging are being tied together, which is unfair and unfounded.

But what are we to do with the mineral resources (estimated to be worth as much as one trillion dollars) still buried underground? Not to mention our human inventory of miners, mining engineers and geologists? Perhaps, we can start by asking: Why did God endow our country with so much mineral wealth? One does not have to be a Doctor of Divinity like Bishop Medroso to come up with the answer: For the good of the Filipino people, if not the whole world.

We could not, of course, continue with uncontrolled and irresponsible mining. Thus, the 1995 Mining Act was passed. A team of geologists, mining engineers, environmentalists, and lawyers took nine years to draft the law, as much time as the Vatican took to write the new Catechism. The mining act is considered one of the most advanced mining laws in the world.

Is Bishop Medroso against mining, per se? Or, is he against mining operated by foreigners?

If the Philippines has the money to develop our mineral resources, let us just go ahead and do so. But, since we do not have the money, we should strike the best deal we can get with foreigners who are willing to risk their money.

In the meantime, Bishop Medroso should hold back his harsh words against mining. After all, the Catholic Church, throughout history, has been one of the largest beneficiaries of the mining industry. All over the world, marble and granite cathedrals and basilicas soar to the skies on skeletons of structural steel. The magnificent stained glass windows are products of mining. And so are the rosary beads.

I have never been to Borongan, but I am sure Bishop Medroso's church and residence could never have been built without products from the mining industry. And he most likely performs the holy sacrifice of the Mass over a slab of marble. The paten, chalice, monstrance and tabernacle are of purest gold. And his vestments are certainly adorned with threads of gold.

# Visayas power unit cuts electricity rates

By Abigail L. Ho

CUSTOMERS of the Visayan Electric Corp. (Veco) will now be able to enjoy lower rates with the issuance of an Energy Regulatory Commission order allowing the implementation of its amended and restated electric power purchase agreement with Toledo Power Corp.

Under the supplemental agreement where the two firms amended and restated their electric power purchase agreement, Toledo Power will have to commit a daily dispatch capacity of 70 megawatts (MW) to Veco.

"Veco can now tap additional capacity within the grid resulting in savings in its power purchases that may be passed on to its electricity consumers," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said in a statement over the weekend.

"The agreement is timely and beneficial for consumers in the Cebu-Negros-Panay grid who are currently affected by generation constraints," he added. "With the agreement, all (independent power producers) will be able to optimize power generation to effectively meet power demand."

With the agreement in place, he said Veco customers would be paying around 27.39 centavos less for every kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity they consume.

The ERC order would likewise allow the implementation of the time of use (TOU) rates that the regulatory body provisionally allowed the National Power Corp. to implement.

Under the TOU mechanism, rates are higher during peak hours and lower during off-peak hours.

# Cepalco to solicit bids

MINDANAO power distributor Cagayan Electric Power and Light Co. (Cepalco) will be soliciting bids for its power supply requirements by next month, in an effort to address the looming power shortage in the Mindanao grid.

Cepalco chair Ramon Abaya said the power distributor will be accepting bids for a generating capacity of 20 megawatts (MW) and a monthly energy delivery of 12.4 million kilowatt-hours (kWh).

The bidding will be open to all interested independent power producers and other power suppliers.

"We'll announce the bidding by the first half of January and we'll have the pre-bid conference by the second half of next month," Abaya told reporters.

He said the submission of bids will be scheduled for March 2005, with contract award and plant construction to start by June. Actual commercial operation should take place by July 2006.

Should the bidding fail, he said Cepalco would have to put up a subsidiary to undertake the project.

As a power distributor, Cepalco is prohibited by law to own a power generating facility. However, there are no restrictions on an affiliate or a subsidiary owning a generation plant. *Abigail L. Ho*

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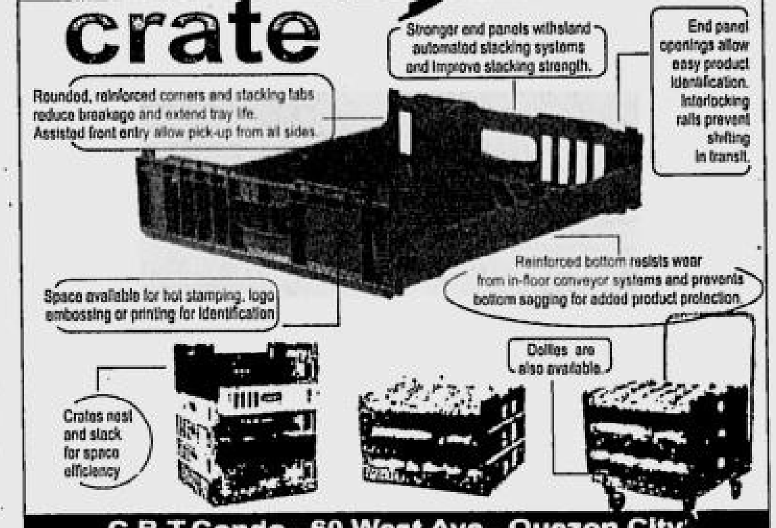
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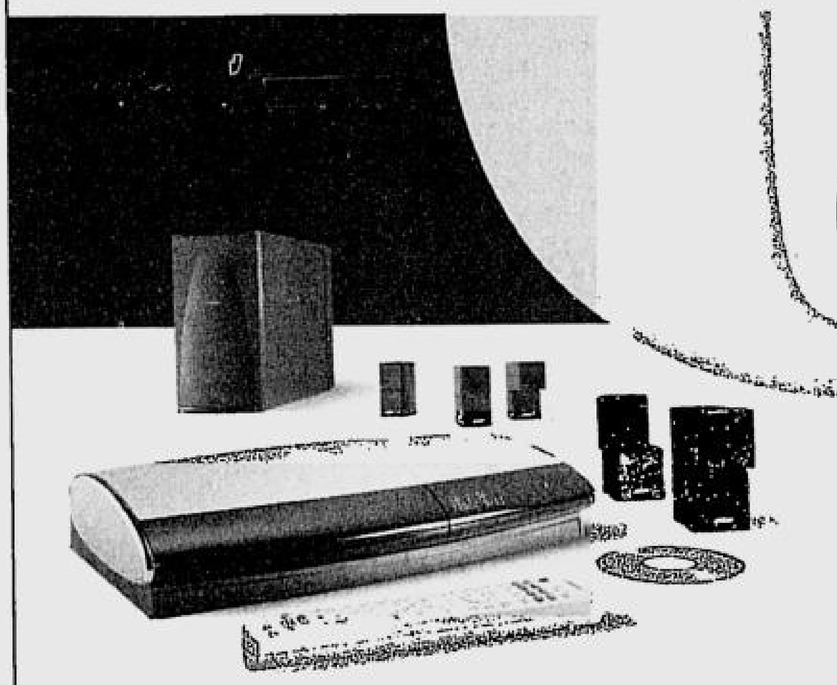

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# Bohol adventure this Yuletide season

DEEP-sea divers and adventure lovers just can't resist the lure of Bohol: and there's no need to wait for summer! This Yuletide season, the come-hither winks of Tagbilaran are here to relish and enjoy.

According to Fantastic Asia tour organizers, tourists at the Alona White Beach are amazed with its wonderful nature setting. "Have memorable adventure trips to the dive sites of Panglao and the neighboring islands of Pamilacan and Balicasag. And for nature lovers, you can go site seeing at famous tourist spots such as Chocolate Hills and see the world's smallest primate-the Tarsier."

And the famous dive sites speak for themselves. There's the Cathedral Wall, "a kaleidoscope of marine life, brilliant reef fish, which dart around among corals and sponges, and schools of big jacks which idle along in the current"; Diver's Haven, with individual holes wherein divers stay and watch all sorts of beautiful fish swimming by; and Turtle Point, which test your patience until turtles finally swim out to see you-after you have enjoyed the scenery on the wall outside the caves: with swimming clownfish, lionfish and triggerfish, and mackerel galore.

And at the Black Coral Forest, guests get the rare opportunity to swim through a "forest" of black coral "which makes this dive an experience not to be missed."

At Bohol Tropics Resort, guests can unwind as they please, play billiards at the fitness center or video games at the game room, plunge into jet-skiing or scuba diving, dance the night away with ballroom dancing or belt to their heart's content at the Club J Videoke, then enjoy delectable oriental, Chinese, and native Filipino cuisines at its restaurants.

At the Alona Palm Beach and Resort and Restaurant, enjoy a romantic candlelit dinner amidst the spacious and quiet tropical garden, with 12 elegantly furnished luxury villas from the white beach. Or enjoy excellent Filipino and international cuisine, swimming fun at the huge pool, and endless water sports activities at the beach area.

Fantastic Asia Travel and Tours provides ticketing services and package tours via Cebu Pacific flights daily to Bohol, plus package tours also to Boracay, Cebu, Palawan, ticketing to all routes in Visayas and Mindanao, and Hong Kong international flight bookings, package tour arrangements, and ticketing services. Call 935-8533 or 0919-4040403.

**CONSULAR CORPS BALL**
Dec. 4, 2004, was the day of the 29th annual ball of the Consular Corps of the Philippines at the Rizal Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Shown, from left, are Conrado L. Kison, Consulate of the Republic of Togo, Arlene Jacobo, Anna Marie Borcena, Angeles 'Toto' Santocildes, and Michael Muong of the US Embassy. The successful event was headed by the dean of the Consular Corps lawyer Vicente Carlos, Consul AH Consulate of Cote D'Ivoire, and Fortune Aleta Ledesma, Consul AH Consulate of the Principality of Monaco, as chair.

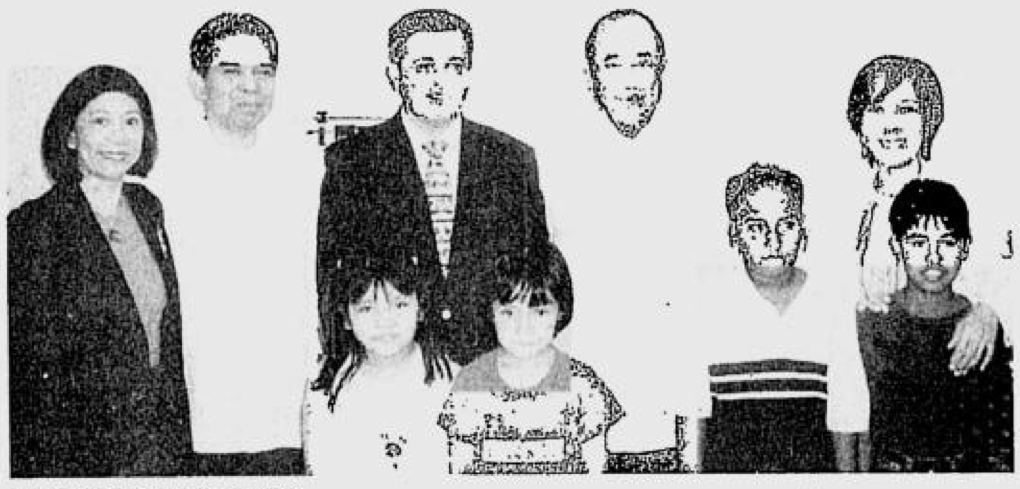
# Batch '79 spearheads UP medical alumni homecoming

THE UP Medical Alumni Society recently held its annual homecoming Dec. 18 to 20. This year's silver jubilarians, the class of 1979, spearheaded the preparations for the traditional activities. For some celebrating classes, Dec. 16 was a time for class reunions or outings in order to reminisce the good old days, pick up the pieces after years of separation and renew ties. It is always a pleasant as well as sentimental journey as alumni from various parts of the Philippines and from abroad like the United States congregate again to their beloved alma mater.

On Dec. 18, a grand alumni parade led by Class '79 and the other celebrating classes was held at the UP College of Medicine and the Philippine General Hospital grounds after the thanksgiving mass. This was followed by the inauguration of the silver jubilarian class project, which is the students' admission's office and records section. The festivities included a barrio fiesta lunch and were highlighted by the pabidahan that showcased the special talents of the alumni of the college. The afternoon was devoted to the business meeting-general assembly and election of the UPMas board and officers for 2005.

On Dec. 19, the traditional medical ball was held at The Peninsula in Makati City, ushered in by a formal dinner and Rigodon de Honor followed by the presentation of awards to the outstanding alumni who have distinguished themselves in various fields. Performance of the celebrating classes was seen and the night was capped by dancing.

On Dec. 20, a continuing medical education lectures Part II on "Cutting Edge Medicine in the Millennium" was held at the college of medicine delivered by experts and authorities both from the local medical community and from North America belonging to the celebrating class of 1979.



**CORPORATE GIVING**
Sanofi-Aventis and the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) recently forged a partnership to promote the well-being of indigent children afflicted with heart disease. Peter Dolinsky (3rd from left), president and general manager of Sanofi-Adventis, and Dr. Lutgerio Torres (4th from left), PHC director, signed a memorandum of agreement formalizing the joint collaboration. Sanofi-Aventis has pledged to sponsor the cardiac rehabilitation program of 100 indigent children and adolescents (aged 7 to 19) who have undergone heart surgery to correct existing heart ailments. Dolinsky also turned over a check donation to PediaCare, the specialized cardiac rehabilitation section of PHC, for the purchase of exercise and office equipment, toys and educational materials for kids enrolled in the program. Also shown are (from left) Cheryl Ann Serrano, Sanofi-Aventis PR manager, Hector Hernandez, Sanofi-Aventis HR director, and Dr. Ina Bunyi, PediaCare head. With them are some of the children who would benefit from the program.

## Bits Clips

### Cabiao High '78 reunion

GRADUATES of batch 1978 of Cabiao High School, Cabiao, Nueva Ecija, are invited to a grand reunion on Dec. 30, Thursday, at the Villa Crisanta Resort in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. Celebrations start from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more details, call Roger de la Cruz at 0910-6417998 or Ting Ortiz Luis at 0920-2284273.

### Cocafi updating directory

THE UNIVERSITY of Sto. Tomas College Alumni Foundation Inc (Cocafi) is currently updating its directory of the UST College of Commerce Alumni, so it can update its members on activities of the organization and other relevant matters. Alumni members whose names are listed in the directory must send the following through fax 781-6629 or e-mail ustcocafi@yahoo.com: name, major and year graduated, home address, business/company name, business address, home telephone number, business phone number, mobile phone number, fax number and e-mail address. Alumni members can also visit http:/www.ust-comalumni.cjb.net for updating, or call Fely de Leon at 781-6629 or 406-1611 local 8374, or 0917-9175035. The requested information can also be mailed to the UST College of Commerce Alumni Office, 4th floor College of Commerce Building, University of Santo Tomas, Espana, Manila.

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### December treats at Red Box

THE HIPPEST karaoke place in the metro, Red Box Karaoke, warms up your holidays by offering unique yuletide treats and special discounts your entire family and friends can enjoy. For only P299, guests may avail themselves of the "Sing All You Can" promo, which entitles them to two complimentary drinks when they book a room between 12 noon to 3 a.m. Lunchtime and "happy hour" guests have the option to avail themselves of the regular rate. When the clock strikes 12, Red Box guests get to pick out a Christmas present or prize, which may range from gift certificates to a whopping P10,000 off the lucky guest's bill for the night. Don't miss out on the fun and check out Red Box Karaoke, the modern oasis located at the third level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City, open daily from 12 noon to 3 am. Call 757-6188.

### 50% off club rates

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### World Pyro Olympics

THE WORLD Pyro Olympics is ongoing until Dec. 30 at the Promenade Area, Bay City, Pasay City. The Olympics feature nightly displays of fireworks with 10 participating countries. For more information, call La Mancha Pyro Productions at 817-4099.

**4TH WORLD BAZAAR FESTIVAL KICKS OFF**
Find the perfect holiday present at the World Bazaar Festival from Dec. 23 to 29 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City, open from 10 a.m. to 12 midnight. It is a one-stop shopping haven with over 500 booths selling goodies from here and abroad. Visitors can also haggle with showbiz personalities at the Celebrity Town, enjoy leisure time at the Activity Center and have their pictures taken with Santa Claus, who has flown straight from Finland. Organized by Worldbex Services International (WSI), the annual event continues to benefit Bantay Bata 163 children. Shown, from left, are Tessie Roque, WSI director, Cesar Mamon, president and chair of Enchanted Kingdom, Gina Lopez, managing director of Bantay Bata 163, Santa Claus, and Joseph Ang, founding chair of WSI.

SeaKid
GREAT
PX meets PinoyExpo

**SIGNING UP FOR 'PX MEETS PINOY BAZAAR'**
Toscano Soriano Trading, a local manufacturer and exporter of dried 'pusit', fish and peanuts, signs up as exhibitor with 'PX Meets Pinoy Bazaar', which is currently showcasing imported and local products at the Megatrade Hall 3 of the SM Megamall until Jan. 2. The expo will benefit the Manuel P. Manahan Foundation and the Alabang New Life Christian Center. At left is Joji Saulog-Manahan, president of Concierge Services Inc, event organizer, with Elizabeth Toscano, general manager of Toscano Soriano Trading. The bazaar features wholesale prices for Christmas gifts and giveaways.

## *ArtQuake's group art exhibit ongoing*

ARTQUAKE recently launched its yearender group art exhibit titled "Aftershock Intensity 4.5 Photo Fashion & Painting Show" Dec 18 at the Live Van Bar and Restos, Marikina City. The event was organized by professor Mildred Castillo-Realuyo. The Exhibit runs until Dec 31.

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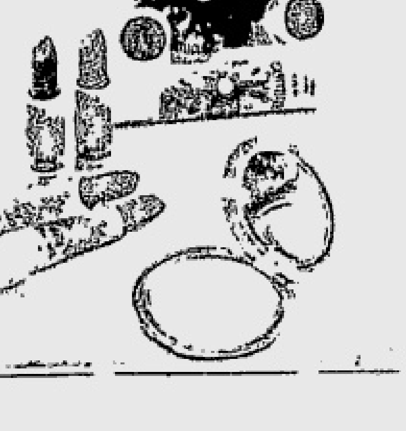

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Transportation and Communications
CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD
OLD MIA ROAD, PASAY CITY,
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IN RE: APPLICATION FOR AUTHORITY TO OPERATE AS AN INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC AIRFREIGHT FORWARDER
CONTAINER BRIDGE PHILS., INC.
Applicant.
CAB CASE NO. 25406

### NOTICE OF HEARING

Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 776, as amended, notice is hereby given that **CONTAINER BRIDGE PHILS., INC.** has filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) an application for Authority to Operate as an International and Domestic Airfreight Forwarder. The initial hearing of the above entitled case will be held on 12 January 2005 at 2:00 P.M. at the Conference Room of the CAB, Old MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila before the undersigned Hearing Officer, at which hearing the applicant shall present evidence.

The applicant is hereby required to have this Notice of Hearing published at least once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation, or that copies thereof and the application itself be sent to existing CAB certified airfreight forwarders either by personal service or by registered mail with return card at least three (3) days before the scheduled hearing.

Parties opposed to the granting of the application must file their written opposition on or before the date of the hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the applicant, and appear at the hearing with such evidence as may be proper under the premises. Failure on the part of any interested party to file its opposition on time and appear at the hearing shall be construed as a waiver of its right to be heard and the Civil Aeronautics Board shall proceed to hear and decide this application in its merit.

Let a copy of the application and this Notice be posted at the CAB Bulletin Board beginning today.

14 December 2004
Pasay City, Philippines

(Sgd.) MANUEL A. MORENTE, JR.
Chief, Legal & Enforcement Division

(PDI - Dec. 20, 27, 2004 & Jan. 3, 2005)

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IN RE: PETITION FOR AUTHORITY TO ACT AS GENERAL SALES AGENT FOR AIR CANADA
SUPERSONIC SERVICES, INC.
Petitioner.
CAB CASE NO. 25392

### NOTICE OF HEARING

Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 776, as amended, notice is hereby given that **SUPERSONIC SERVICES, INC.** has filed with the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) a petition for Authority to act as General Sales Agent for Air Canada. The initial hearing of the above entitled case will be held on 13 January 2005 at 2:00 P.M. at the Conference Room of the CAB, Old MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila before the undersigned Hearing Officer, at which hearing, the petitioner shall present evidence.

The petitioner is hereby required to have this Notice of Hearing published at least once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation.

Parties opposed to the granting of the petition must file their written opposition on or before the date of the hearing, furnishing a copy of the same to the petitioner, and appear at the hearing with such evidence as may be proper under the premises. Failure on the part of any interested party to file its opposition on time and appear at the hearing shall be construed as a waiver of its right to be heard and the Civil Aeronautics Board shall proceed to hear and decide this petition on its merit.

Let a copy of the application and this Notice be posted at the CAB Bulletin Board beginning today.

13 December 2004
Pasay City, Philippines

(Sgd.) MANUEL A. MORENTE, JR.
Chief Legal & Enforcement Division

(PDI - Dec. 20, 27, 2004 & Jan. 3, 2005)

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late NONILON S. TRAJANO under Doc 145, Page 29, Book II Series of 2004 of Notary Public Atty Godofredo T. Liban of Quezon City, has been extrajudicially settled with waiver of renunciation of rights among his heirs as per Doc. No. 4246, Series of 1999 Service No. 4246 OR. 810 and authenticated by Consul General Generoso G. Calonge. Washington, D.C.
(PDI-Dec 27, Jan 3 & 9, 2004)

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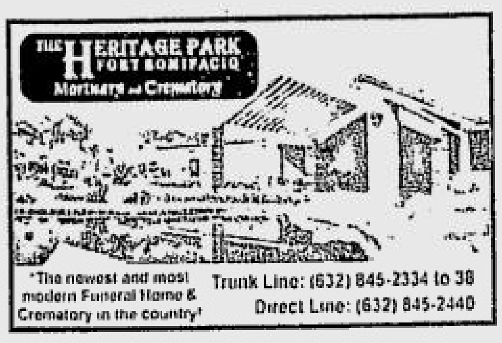
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# 2004: Year of teenage virus writers

**By Erwin Oliva**
*Contributor*

SVEN Jaschan, the self-confessed German author of infamous computer viruses Netsky and Sasser, was a "hero" in his class.

He wrote computer viruses at the basement of his mom's home.

While his activities earned him accolades among his peers, Jaschan was hated by companies hit by two of the year's top computer viruses.

Netsky is considered the most lethal computer virus in 2004, according to Charles Cousins, managing director of Sophos Asia Pte Ltd.

"It was the most widespread virus this year," the executive added.

Jaschan was later reported to have been hired by a German firewall company to do programming.

Indeed, the anti-virus industry saw teenage virus writers producing damaging computer viruses. Apart from Jaschan, other well-known teenage virus writers were Jeffrey Lee Parso who developed the Blaster-B worm, Kim Vanvaeck aka Gigabyte, and Czech MarekStrihavka of the 29A virus-writing gang.

"These kids were doing it for fame," Cousins said.

Also this year, the anti-virus community was witness to the emergence of so-called "Trojans" designed to steal information from people's computers, launch denial of service attacks and "phishing."

Trojans are computer viruses that reside in an infected computer. They are hidden but usually take control of a system as it gathers confidential data such as the person's user name and passwords.

Trojans are also designed to transform computers into "zombies" that are necessary to launch denial of service attacks against a target system.

Cousins said that more virus writers are now linked to spammers who are conniving to make profit out of spam or unsolicited e-mail.

Phishing or information theft has also become widespread this year, the executive said.

"The good news this year is that there were many reported arrests of virus writers. It seems Microsoft's bounty on them worked," he added, referring to Microsoft's offer of tens of thousands of dollars for those who can provide information leading to the identification of virus writers.

# RP firms see IT budgets growing in 2005: IDC

**By Erwin Oliva**
*Contributor*

WITH better prospects for business next year, top Philippine corporations are confident that their total information technology spending will also likely increase in 2005, according to a study by International Data Corp. Philippines (IDC).

Philippine companies will increase spending on hardware and networking, as well as subscribe to information technology (IT) services and software, IDC said.

IT investments will go to "improving systems infrastructure" and developing business applications, the IT market research firm said.

"Top corporations in the Philippines are generally optimistic about the economic climate and business prospects in the country today, and even next year. This helped greatly in bringing forth IT market traction during the first 10 months of 2004 and would significantly translate to further IT expansionary spending in 2005, particularly hardware buying and solutions on security, storage and ERM. Vendors need to come up with offerings that are parallel to corporate clients' needs and wants," said Jubert Daniel Alberto, senior analyst at IDC Philippines.

Based on data on the corporations' IT spending in 2004, more than 30 percent went to PC hardware, followed by networking equipment (20 percent), software (20 percent), IT services (17.3 percent), and peripherals (11.6 percent).

The data was taken from IDC's study titled "View from the Top: A Look at the IT Spending of Top Corporations in the Philippines." It looked at the IT spending behavior of the country's top corporations.

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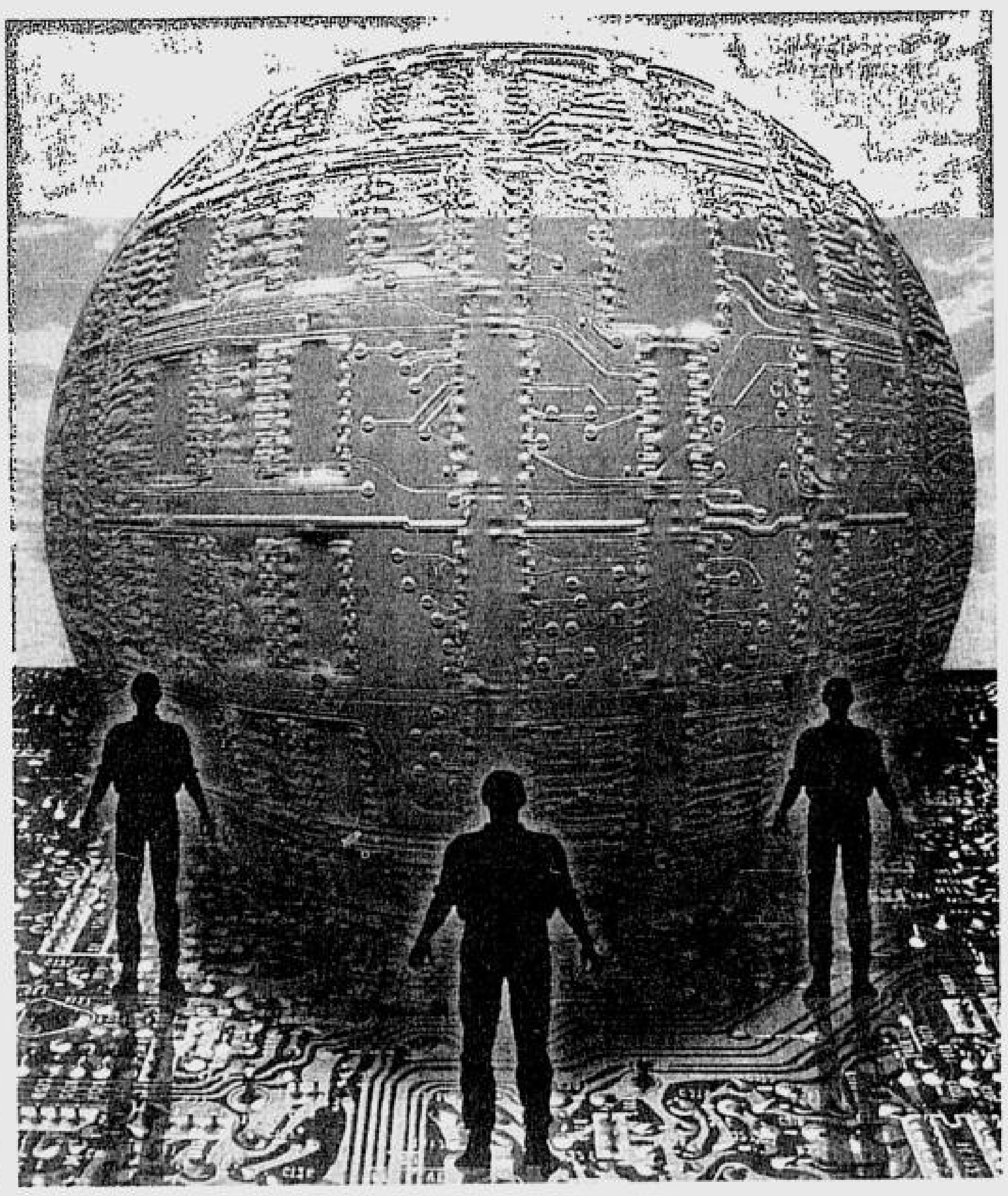

A SLOWDOWN for the technology export market is seen for East Asia in 2005.

# ADB sees technology export slowdown for East Asia in 2005

**By Alexander Villafania**
*Contributor*

AFTER two years of continued growth in the East Asian electronics, semiconductor and IT sectors, the industry will face another challenge in 2005 as the economies of major global markets start slowing down, according to a report from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

East Asian countries such as the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia are exporters of semiconductor and electronics components.

In its latest East Asian Growth and Restructuring report, the ADB said global economic growth is pegged only at a low 4 percent in 2005, which is seen to soften the business for electronics exporting countries.

The ADB pointed out that consumer spending in the United States and Japan—the major markets for electronics exporters—would slow down in 2005 despite their relatively strong performance in 2004.

Other factors in the projected slowdown in the electronics exportation business are lackluster performance in the US market in the third quarter of this year, and little new orders for IT products.

The ADB report also said overproduction of electronics products contribute to an increase in inventory levels and lower prices in the first quarter of 2005, which happens to be a seasonal low for the industry.

The report also cited the latest report of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which points to slower global economic expansion beginning late this year or early 2005.

On the other hand, East Asia performed very well in 2004, reaching an overall 7.6 percent gross domestic product, despite high oil prices that pushed up prices of basic commodities.

The Philippine GDP grew to a better-than-expected 6.5 percent this year, higher than the ADB's 5.9 percent forecast in July 2004.

However, the expected end of the global electronics cycle, weaker economic growth in industrial countries and China's economic slowdown are expected to push down growth to just 4.7 percent GDP for the Philippines in 2005.

# Filipino 'rebels' face online players in South Korea for MU tournament

**By Erwin Oliva**
*Contributor*

THE FILIPINO team "Rebels" is competing in the first international MU World Battle Tournament of WebZen Inc., a game developer based in South Korea.

The Philippine team emerged as the country's representative after defeating 32 other teams in the national finals last month.

The "Rebels" team is composed of Jarvis Ng, Alfred Mendoza, Alchen Macatangkay, Alain Zurita and Ronnel Neiz.

At the national finals, 32 teams competed in Battle Soccer, a segment of MU Online wherein characters compete in a virtual soccer match. Each team was composed of high-level MU Online playable characters like magic gladiators, blade knights, soul masters and muse elves.

The goal of Battle Soccer is for each team to try to be the first to garner 100 points per match. Each soccer goal is worth 20 points but players are allowed to kill their challengers during the game. Each kill is worth one point.

Team "Rebels" are facing players from South Korea, China, Thailand and Japan. The top winner will take home $20,000.

The Philippine team is a mix of young and mature players.

Jarvis, 22, studied in Thames International Business School; while Mendoza, 29, is an Internet café owner from San Fernando, Pampanga. Macatangkay, 20, is an undergraduate student at the Centro Escolar University; while Zurita, 26, works at eTelecare International. Finally, Neiz, 25, graduated from the Technological Institute of the Philippines in Cubao.

# GMA orders ICT commission to stay focused on e-learning

**By Erwin Oliva**
*Contributor*

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) to focus on efforts to develop e-learning capabilities in primary and secondary public schools.

Ms Arroyo directed CICT chief Virgilio Peña to help develop courseware for public school students.

The President also urged Peña to convince academicians to use ICT as a focal point in their innovative approaches to education.

Meawhile, presenting CICT's five-point agenda in the next six years, Peña told the President that the nationwide information technology program intends to focus on projects that would have wide impact on education, job generation, government service, health and business.

The five-point agenda focuses on providing affordable Internet and digital access to all villages and citizens; computer literacy and competency in society; generating high-value jobs in the community through world-class ICT services; providing efficient, effective and transparent government services to citizens directly; and providing a healthy and competitive business environment.

Peña said the CICT will also push for the development of applications focusing on government services, e-learning for basic education and e-commerce for small- and medium-sized enterprises.

It will also push for policies that would encourage more deployment of broadband networks.

The agency will also continue pushing computer literacy programs and the creation of regional ICT hubs throughout the country.

Peña made the presentation at the meeting of the National Economic and Development Authority-Cabinet Group last week.

# US e-commerce holiday season sales up 28%

NEW YORK—US online retail sales for the holiday season are up at a 28-percent pace compared with the same period last year, a survey showed.

The eSpending report by Goldman, Sachs, Harris Interactive and Nielsen NetRatings showed Internet sales of $16.7 billion during the first six weeks of the 2004 holiday season.

That was up 28 percent from the $13 billion spent online during the same period in 2003.

Music was the fastest-growing category in e-commerce, with sales up 33 percent, followed by the video and DVD and jewelry categories, up 32 percent each.

Book sales were up 27 percent, and the toys/video games category grew 22 percent.

The report was based on a survey of more than 1,000 online US adult consumers for spending between November 1 and December 12.

"Jewelry has turned out to be a strong category online with substantial growth in sales this season, increasing 32 percent year-over-year as a category," said Heather Dougherty, analyst at Nielsen NetRatings.

"As the online buying population matures, there is increased confidence and comfort in purchasing non-commoditized goods online, which has provided retailers with the opportunity to sell a wide variety of product categories and price points."

*AFP*

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**CHRISTMAS** urban nature guide /C2

# Thank you for a great year

**ALL4ART**

*Bea Zobel Jr.*

I AM NOT ashamed to admit it. Once in a while (all right, my boyfriend, Joel, will tell you it's quite often!) I leaf through my compilation of articles and feel a warm sense of satisfaction. As 2004 draws to an end, I can only look back with gratitude at what was a most productive year. As I have always explained, working on these articles has really been a long process for me as well. I have had to do field trips to different parts of our country, from the coves of Iloilo to the fishport of Navotas, from Batanes to Bohol.

Sometimes I ran off to follow a tip—just like Nancy Drew or maybe Angelina Jolie! Remember the time when I sailed to Nantucket Island because my friend Ina Calalang happened to find a reference to a Filipino making baskets there?

For archival research I have had to work with the wonderful staff of the Filipinas Heritage Library under the able guidance of their director, Maritoni Ortigas. I must admit that half the time my columns took longer to produce because I would get caught up in the fascinating articles that Maritoni and her associates help me find!

All throughout I always sought the help of experts whom I now like to think of as friends: Ramon Villegas wanting to know more about the story behind every jewelry piece; Ricky Jose pointing out that telltale extra fold of cloth tucked into the back of Filipino holy statues; Gardie Labad narrating the epic tale of Bohol's broas; Colin McKay unraveling the secrets of Thai cuisine; Cookie Feria taking me in tow in Madrid—the list just goes on and on. The personalities involved are diverse as the fields they represent.

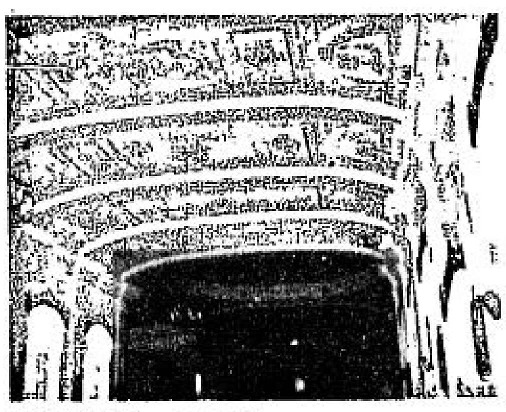
Speaking of personalities, it is certainly the amazing people that one meets along the way who made the effort worthwhile. I was always received so warmly. There was the Bumanlag family in Navotas (yes, I mispelled the name the first time!) and the Zialcitas in Quiapo; there was Baby Quiblat in Taal with her cousins the Villavicencios and even her mother. There was Cora Relova in Pila, the Abads in Batanes, as well as Alice and Pons Saldana in Naburot. I always felt like a long lost relative coming home. It is true what they say about Filipino hospitality. Filipinos will take you into their homes even if you're a nosy columnist!

## Food

Everywhere I went there was always food! I can still taste the *quesong puti* of Aling Leony, the *putong sulot* of Aling Truding, the *bibingkang hipon* from Paete.

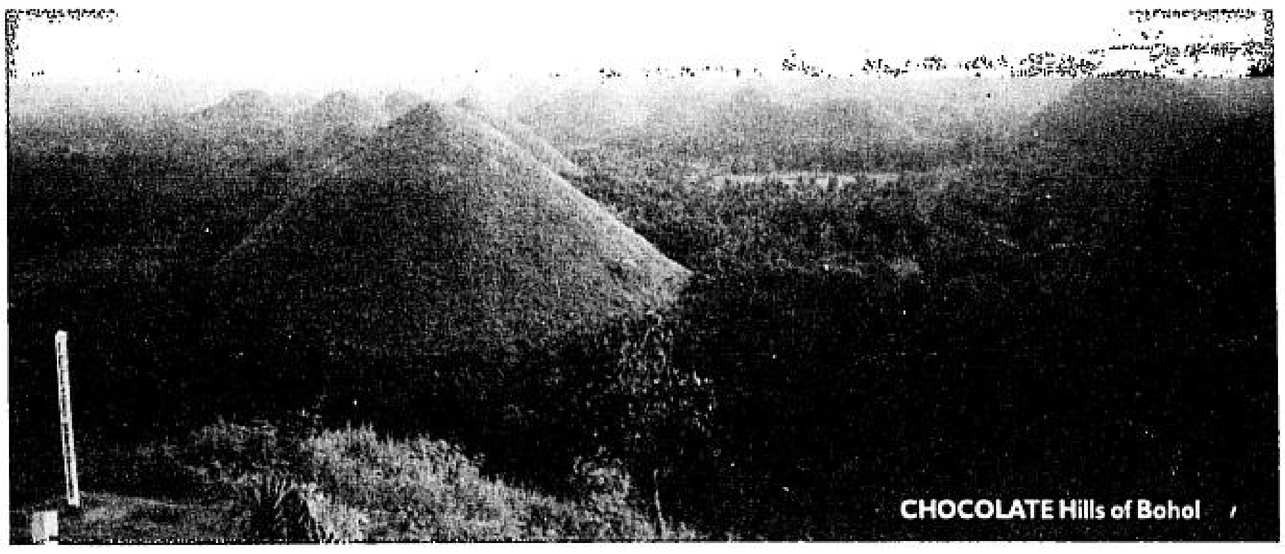
I was often bawled over by the great skill of our people. Remember the Mangyans of Mindoro and their exquisit baskets? Remember the *burdaderas* of Parañaque, Taal and Lum

THANK/ C3



CALACA Church of Batangas

PAHIYAS in Lukban



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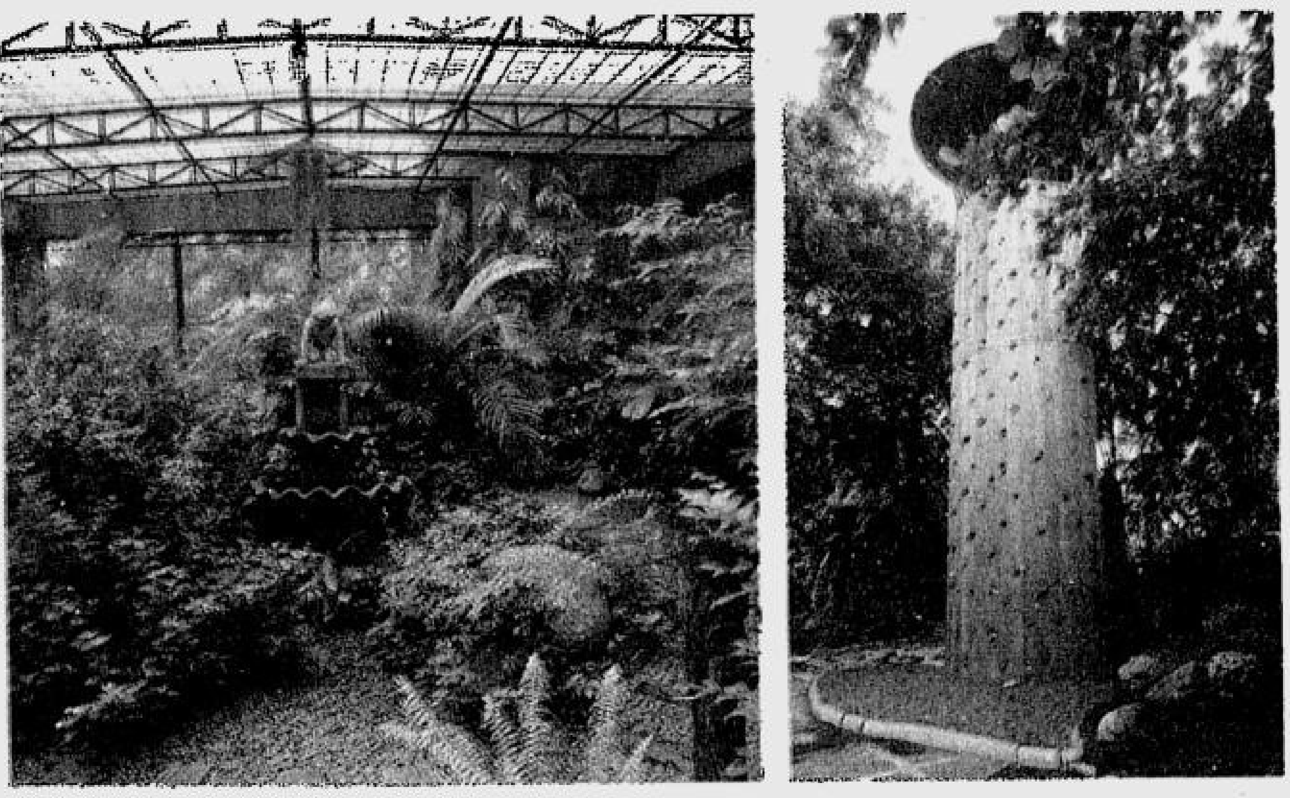
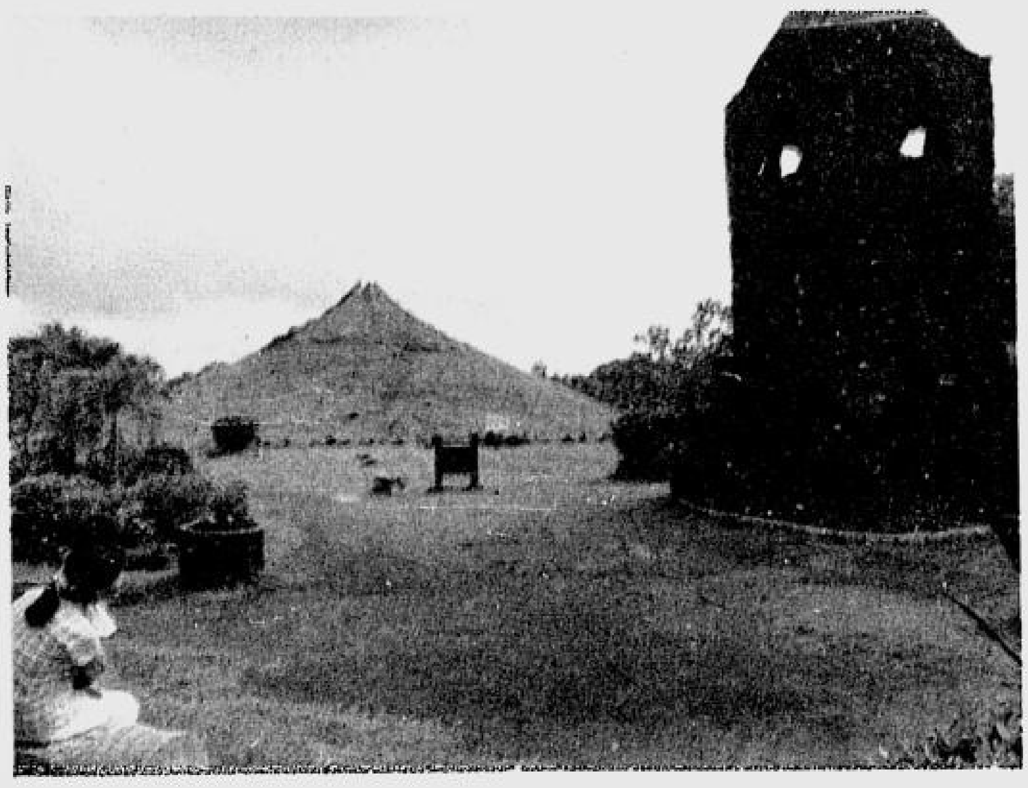


**THE ORCHIDARIUM** at the Rizal Park displays a variety of orchid species and ornamental plants



**REPLICA** of volcano and ruins at Nayong Pilipino

# The Yuletide urban nature adventure challenge

BELIEVE it or not, there are nature havens in Manila. Spend part of your holidays outdoors! Breathe fresh air for a change, be in touch with the environment, detox and recharge yourself by forgetting about being in the city for a while.

### Arroceros Forest Park

Located dead center in polluted downtown Manila is Arroceros Forest Park, probably the best nature trip in the city. Breathe deeply and get a high on clean air as you take a walk in the urban forest.

The air quality inside the forest proves that cities need parks and forests to purify all of those urban fumes. To show that the trees are busy cleaning city air, the bark of all trees in the forest has turned black from its normal brown color in reaction to the city pollution.

Carefully planted and maintained by the Winner Foundation, the forest is a surprising collection of hardwood trees that range in size and age between fully-grown and a majority not quite at the full-grown stage that still need nurturing.

Paths through the forest offer a variety of walks. Along the promenade beside the river, the arches of Quezon Bridge frame the Pasig. From the peaceful surroundings of the park, the view of Quiapo on the opposite bank seems a world away.

Located on the site of the former Parian (Chinese quarter) of Spanish colonial Manila and one of the most important archaeological sites in present-day Manila, Arroceros Forest Park and its neighbor, Mehan Garden, are both fighting for survival against the threat of new construction.

Arroceros Forest Park is on Arroceros Street at the foot of Quezon Bridge in Manila. It is open daily.

**PRIDE OF PLACE**

*Augusto F. Villalon*

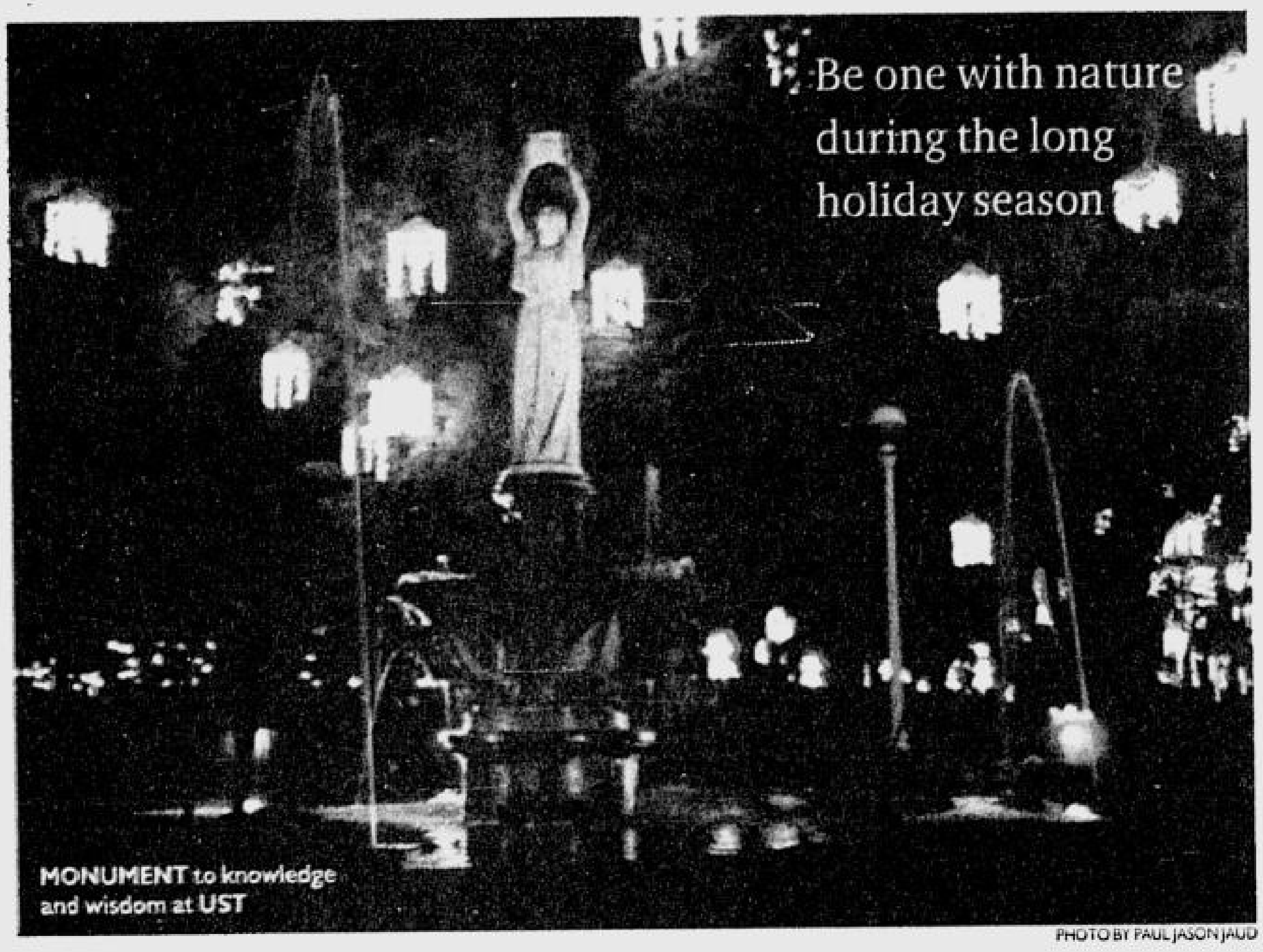
### Orchidarium

Under huge hardwood trees, flowers bloom everywhere at the Manila Orchidarium.

The verdant garden shows off a variety of orchid species, unusual Philippine plants, a collection of flowering plants named after the First Ladies of the Philippines, masses of colorful ornamental plants, and in its lagoon find the nilad, the floating water plant from where Manila takes its name.

It is not just plants and flowers at the Orchidarium. In the Butterfly Pavilion, walk among fluttering butterflies and if you are lucky watch butterflies hatching. Rent fishing gear and go fishing in the well-stocked lagoon. Or just take it easy, imbibe nature from the wooden deck of Lush Life Restaurant. The restaurant is also an art gallery and where jazz bands play at night.

The Orchidarium is at Agrifina Circle beside the Museum of the Filipino People in Manila. For information, call Lush Life Restaurant 5229547 or the Orchidarium at 5276376.



Be one with nature during the long holiday season

**MONUMENT** to knowledge and wisdom at UST

PHOTO BY PAUL JASON JAUD

### Nayong Pilipino

Remember Nayong Pilipino? Each Manileño has probably made a visit to the park on a school field trip at least once his life. Part of it has reopened after having been closed for almost two years.

The reason for the closure was that a large part of Nayong Pilipino was earmarked for runway expansion needed for the new international airport. Negotiations are underway for Nayong Pilipino's transfer to a new site at the reclamation area off Roxas Boulevard. But the management reopened the old park to the public just this month.

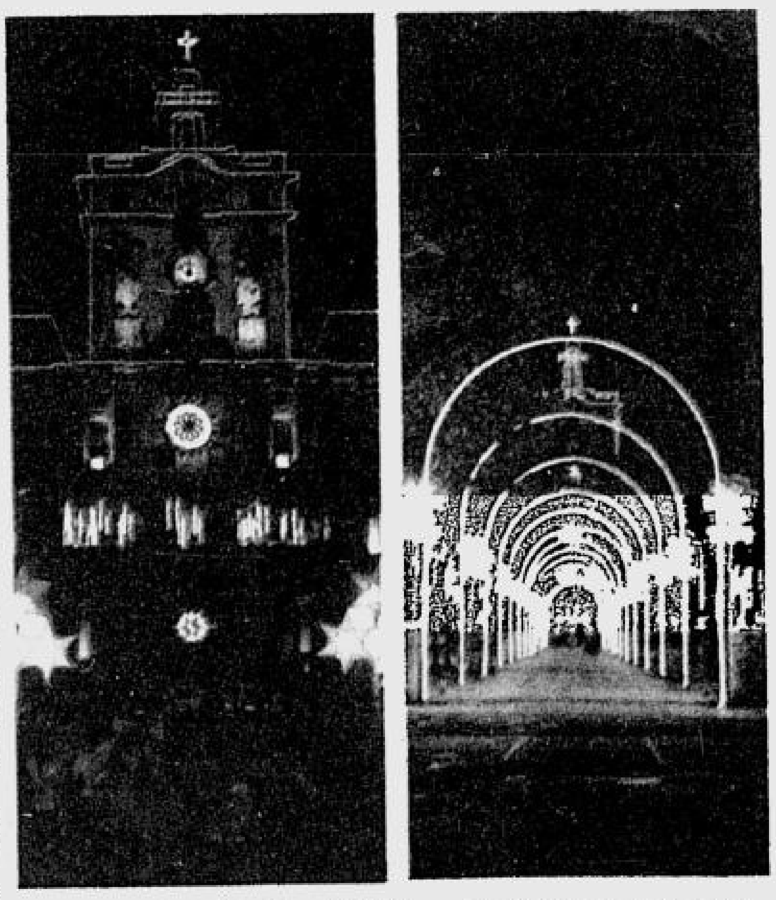
"Kapiraso ng Nayong Pilipino" is what is left of the old Nayong Pilipino. It might be diminished in size but not in appeal.

It includes the replica houses grouped as the Bicol Area near the downscaled Mayon Volcano that children love to climb. Next to the volcano facsimile, rowboats are available and fishing gear on hand at the huge lagoon next to the Bicol Area.

The Ilocos area survives. The "Vigan House" receives visitors and can again be booked for social functions.

Nature is the stunning new attraction of Nayong Pilipino. The closure of the park gave trees and plants needed regeneration time. All of the vegetation is now healthier, bigger and greener. The rich foliage has grown into a veritable bird sanctuary despite its improbable airport location.

Nayong Pilipino charges no admission fee until Jan, 2, 2005 when entrance will be P10 for adults and P5 for children. Call 832 3767.



**CANOPY** of lights (right) at UST's Benavides Park leads to the UST Main Bldg silhouetted by lights and accented with Christmas lanterns

### Birdwatching

The surprise is that Manila is actually a good place for bird watching. Abandoned urban places like the mud flats in the Roxas Boulevard reclamation area, La Mesa watershed, and Nayong Pilipino near the airport are favorite sites of birds.

Other sites are the Arroceros Forest Park, American Cemetery in Fort Bonifacio, University of the Philippines campus, and the Manila Zoo. Even more astonishing is finding out that bird colonies live in unlikely places like Kamuning in Quezon City.

Intrigued? Join one of the club's monthly guided tours, given free of charge. Binoculars are rented out at P50 each. Contact the Wild Bird Club of the Philippines at myckle@thenet.ph or ph_photo97@yahoo.com

### FEU campus

The quadrangle of the Far Eastern University is an oasis framed by Art Deco buildings designed and built by National Artist Pablo Antonio. The greenery and calm provides a foil to the choke-filled University Belt, which has become more known for its pollution than for its education.

### UST campus

The campus of the Royal and Pontifical University of Santo Tomas is 21 hectares of trees, plants and greenery alongside tasteful school buildings. One can sit at the benches beneath trees lining the football field or stroll along Benavides Park with its rows of trees and ancient rocks (hauled from the original UST campus in Intramuros) leading to the massive UST Main Bldg. whose magnificently lit cross can be seen at all points of the city at night.

Visitors may also want to take a walk along the UST Botanical Garden and get an education on Philippine flora (UST old-timers know it as the Pharmacy Garden since it keeps plants with pharmaceutical properties).

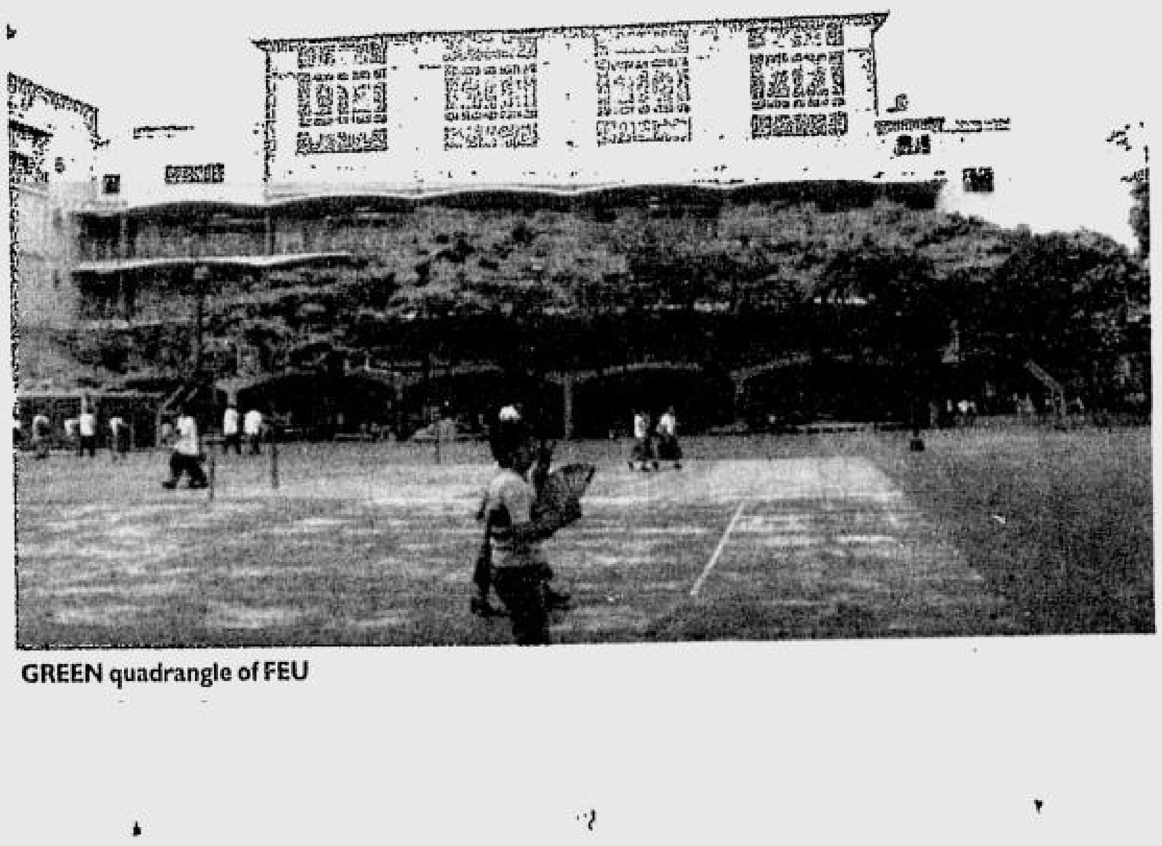
The campus of Asia's oldest university is a visual treat these days especially at night. Jullie Yap Daza describes the scene in a recent column in the Manila Standard:

"The trees are festooned with tiny fairy lights, dripping as if with rain. The main building is adorned with the huge lanterns that convey a pastoral air. The Arch of the Centuries (the entrance to UST) is framed with a canopy of illumination. On the green grass, along with sidewalks, the symbols of the season--stars, poinsettias, candles--glow. what makes the UST lights special is that Thomasians believe not just in the spirit but also in the soul of Christmas--the reason for Christmas being the birth of the Baby Jesus."

*Email feedback to afvillalon@hotmail.com.*

**MANILA** as a bird sanctuary? Contact the Wild Bird Club to find out.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WILD BIRD CLUB)



**GREEN** quadrangle of FEU

**ROLLING** hills of Batanes

*BANIGS* and *banig*-makers of Majayjay

# Thank you for a great year

From page C1

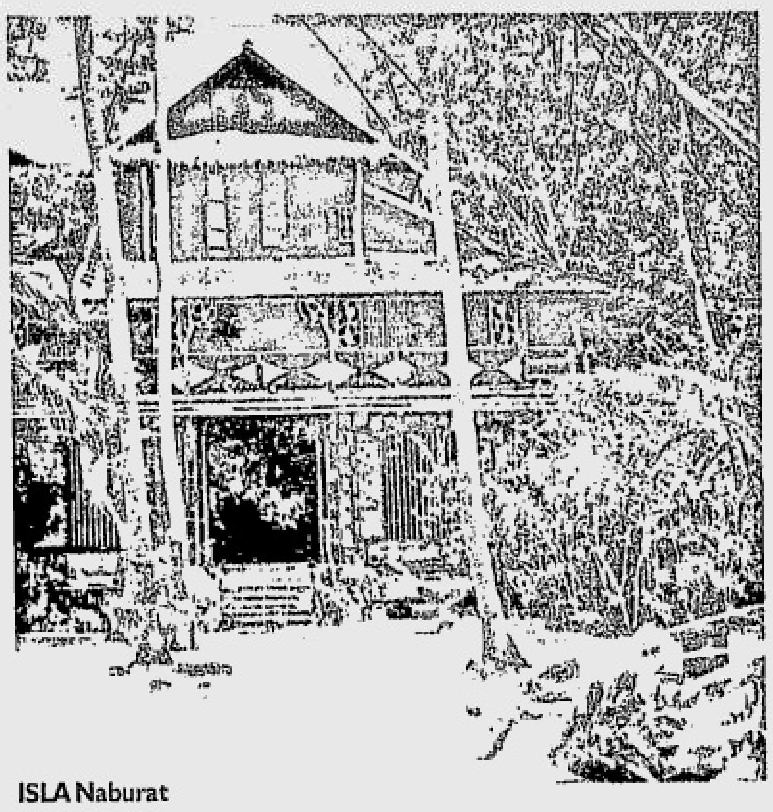
bang? Remember the *banig*-maker of Majayjay? What remarkable skills they had learned at their grandparents' knees! Sadly much of their knowledge may die with them. We so desperately need to revitalize our crafts for the next generations.

I noted that I felt like a long lost relative coming home. This is true in every sense of the word. I was really coming home after being so far away from my country for so long. I was really coming home after somehow being so blind to the beauty of what actually surrounded me here in our very own beloved islands. What a homecoming it was!

I saw the skies over Batanes and the skies over Bukidnon. I wept over the ceiling of a Batangas church and the decaying windows of a Binondo house. I marveled a lot, cursed a lot, laughed and cried a lot.

Interestingly, I saw traces of ourselves even abroad—remember Rizal in Cuba? Remember the "bulul" in Madrid?

All throughout, what was especially gratifying was the opportunity to interact with readers from around the country. I received hundreds of e-mail, a point which I mention here as a testimony to the fact that people really care about our arts and heritage. People really liked to know more about *bakya*, *banig* and *biscocho*. I often had relatives of the historical figures I was featuring writing me to contribute more information.



**ISLA** Naburat

*BURDADEROS* of Lumbang

I won't hide the fact that not all the comments that were sent in were positive. Someone thought that my trip on the MRT was frivolous. Once, I was even scolded for using the expression "*naku*" all the time since it is really a reference to a holy figure whose name I was taking in vain.

## Inspiration

As always, my family was a source of inspiration. My brothers and sisters clipped articles for me. My father even contributed a drawing. And of course, if all else fails, I found that I could always write about my mother! Seriously I did feel I had to share something about her work with the Mangyans and even with the Arroceros Forest Park. And my mother really took my articles seriously. It reached a point that there were certain things Mom wouldn't let me do or would insist I do because "you are writing about our country now!"

So what did I learn?

I learned that Filipinos love: to hear about *chismis* even if it happened hundreds of years ago. We love food. We love to cook it, eat it and read about it. I learned that no one likes to get up early. When you plan an early trip everyone will insist that they are coming along but no one will be there at 6 a.m.!

But I have also learned that we have a beautiful country, there are still many pockets full of the richness of our cultures waiting to be better understood. We have every reason to be proud and no reason to be envious of other places. More important, we have creativity and we have talent. Let us channel our energies and skills into cultural tourism, heritage education and craft revitalization so that we can make things even better.

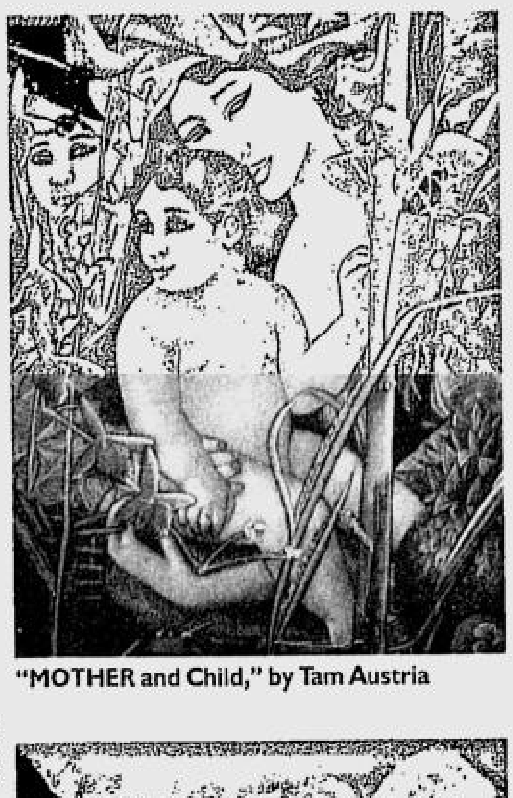
We have been gifted with a great country and we must take care of it!

Thank you, thank you for a great year!

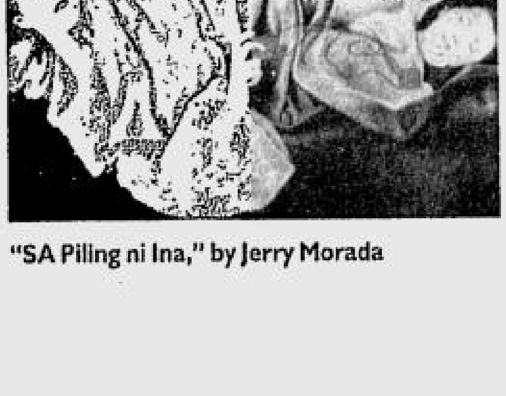
# Group show caps year

GALERIE Joaquin is holding "The Best of Year 2004" at its branches in San Juan (371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane) and The Podium.

Works in the exhibit are by Tam Austria, Antonio Austria, Ramon Orlina, Angelito Antonio, Gig de Pio, Andi Cubi, Norma Belleza, Nikulas Lebajo, Manny Garibay, Dominic Rubio, Edwin Tres Reyes, Karina Baluyut, Marcel Antonio, Hermes Alegre, Bayani Ray Alcala, Eileen Escueta, Dennis Filart, Leonardo Reyes, Ricky Montilla, Jerry Morada, Gino Tioseco, Marcial Pontillas, Bernard Vista, Richard Arimado and Tito Espanol.



"**MOTHER** and Child," by Tam Austria



"**SA** Piling ni Ina," by Jerry Morada

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December 25 - 12nn to 8pm
December 31 - 7am to 7pm
January 1 - 12nn to 8pm
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P4/Piece
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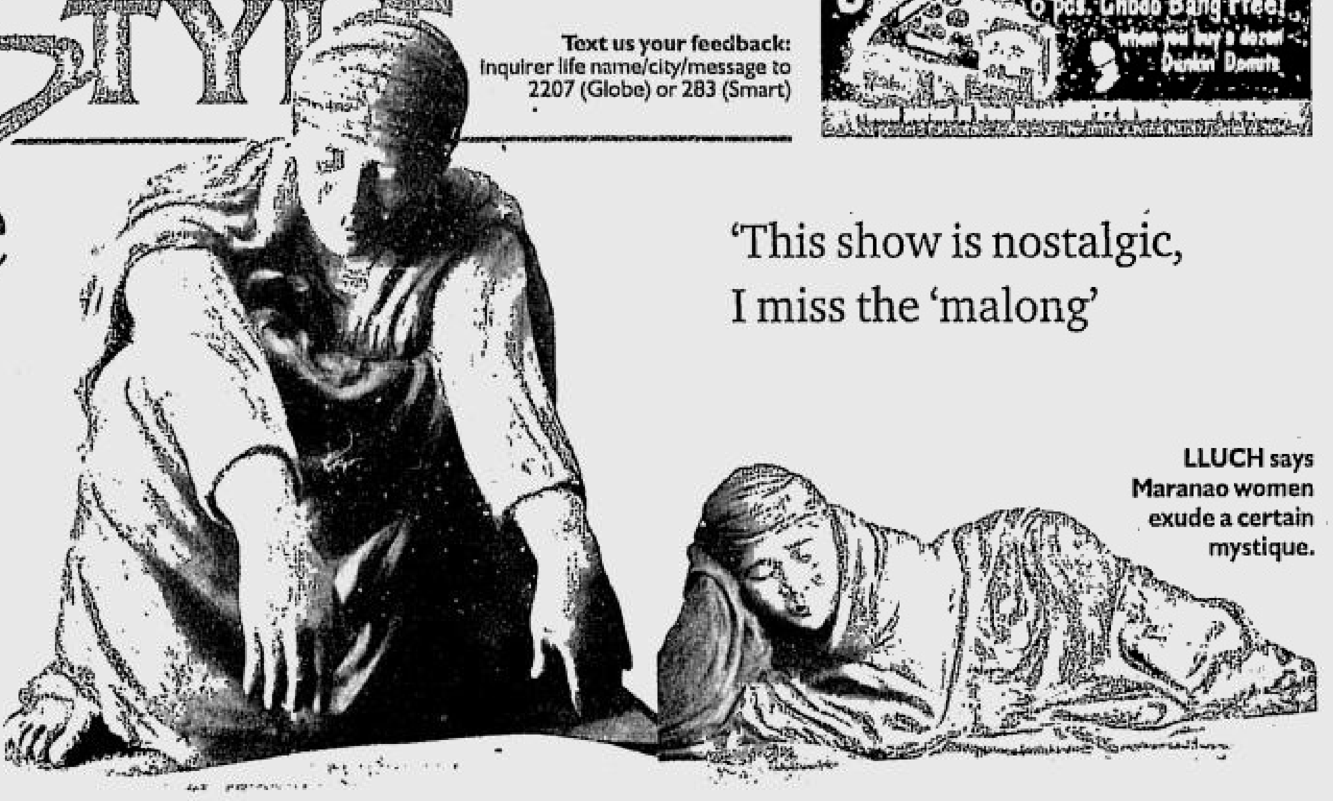
# Julie Lluch's serene Maranao women

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
*Contributor*


LLUCH says Maranao women exude a certain mystique.

'This show is nostalgic, I miss the 'malong'

AS A CHILD, she had wanted to be a ballet dancer, for Julie Lluch, who belongs to a prominent family in Iligan City, was drawn to the performing arts.

She studied ballet and music formally, but it was her elder sister Charie, now a nun (Sister Aquinas Lluch) who had a more powerful soprano, and who landed the lead roles in all the operettas and musicals staged at St. Michael's Academy.

After majoring in Philosophy and graduating from the University of Santo Tomas, Julie began running around with a literary crowd. Her favorites were Nick Joaquin and José Garcia Villa, and these writers exerted a strong influence on her.

"I had always wanted to express myself but I couldn't be a ballet dancer," she recalls. "I was just led there (to sculpture), just chose what was the true path. Maybe it was just destiny, I was meant to be there."

Julie became a sculptress, working with terra cota. And soon she mounted her first solo show, although she felt it was premature because she did not yet have a broad ("*malawak na*") world view. She did self-portraits, and portraits of her family and her idols Joaquin and Villa. Joaquin was one of the guests of honor.

"Nick was really a driving force, an inspiration, and the show was well-attended," she says. Other solo shows followed through the years.

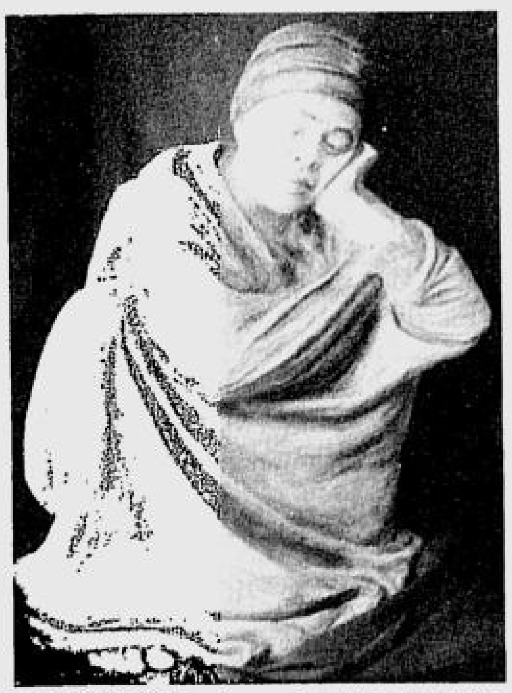
The latest is ongoing at Galleria Duemila (SM Megamall) until Jan. 12. The focus, this time, is on the Maranao women of Marawi City, which is only an hour's ride from Iligan.

Caparisoned in their traditional *malong* and *combong* (head scarf), the women subjects exude serenity. They appear to be asleep or just resting, meditating perhaps. The graceful folds of their costume immediately attract the viewer, and make for a lyrical touch.

"I see them a lot," says the artist about her models. "They are very attractive visually. They hold a mystique for me. They're there but *parang* [seem] so distant and separate. I've always wanted to reach out to them, as sisters."

For this show, Julie deliberately kept away from political issues. "Can you ignore political issues?" she asks. "I just inhibited myself. I was attracted to the beauty of their culture and tradition, their colorful *malong* and *combong*. The aim is friendship and understanding."

Alas, she does not see the *malong* anymore in Iligan; it has been replaced by a less colorful garment: "So this show is nostalgia," the artist concludes. I miss the *malong*. I miss the beautiful, colorful Maranao costume."


**THE FIGURES** are in pensive states to invoke contemplation.

**THE ARTIST**

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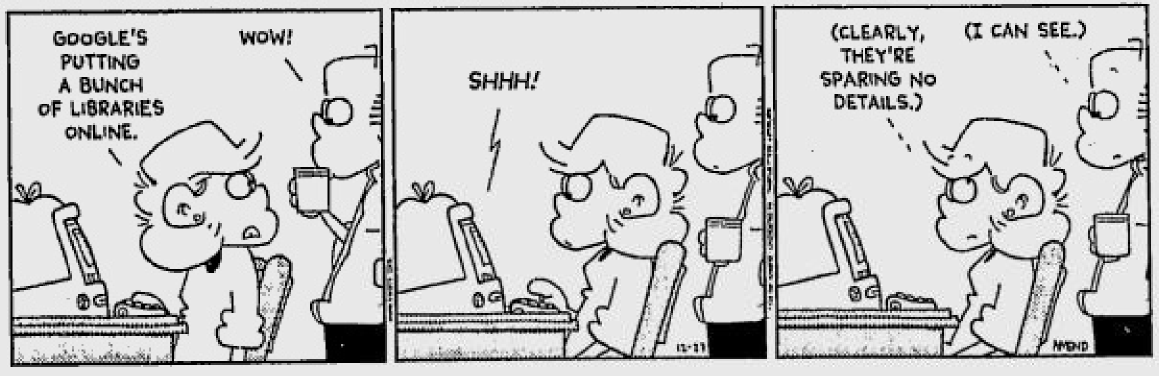
ComicRelief
e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph
MONDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2004

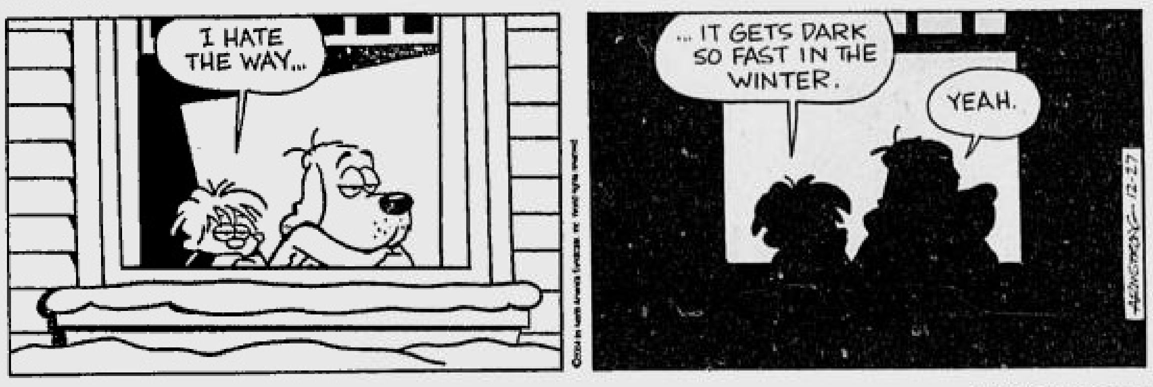
### FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


GOOGLE'S PUTTING A BUNCH OF LIBRARIES ONLINE.
WOW!
SHHH!
(CLEARLY, THEY'RE SPARING NO DETAILS.)
(I CAN SEE.)
12-27
AMEND

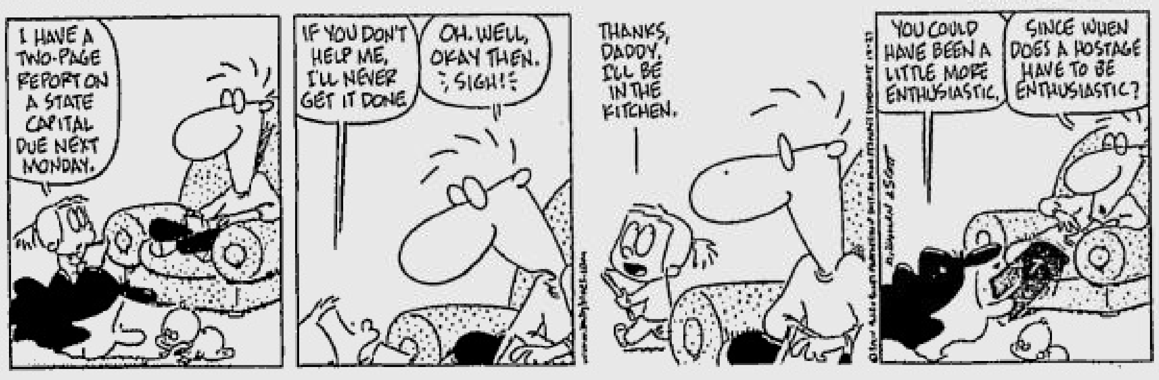
### MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I HATE THE WAY...
... IT GETS DARK SO FAST IN THE WINTER.
YEAH.
ARMSTRONG 12-27

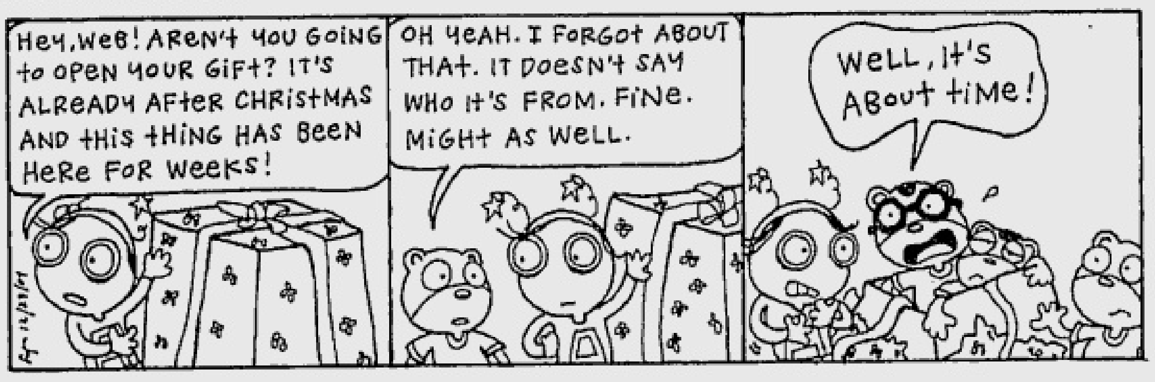
### BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I HAVE A TWO-PAGE REPORT ON A STATE CAPITAL DUE NEXT MONDAY.
IF YOU DON'T HELP ME, I'LL NEVER GET IT DONE.
OH. WELL, OKAY THEN. SIGH!
THANKS, DADDY. I'LL BE IN THE KITCHEN.
YOU COULD HAVE BEEN A LITTLE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC.
SINCE WHEN DOES A HOSTAGE HAVE TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC?

### ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WeB! ARen't you GoiNG to oPeN your GiFt? It's ALReADy AFteR CHRistMAS AND this tHiNG HAS BeeN HeRe FoR weeks!
OH yeAH. I FoRGot ABOUT THAt. It DoesN't SAY WHo it's FROM. FiNe. MiGHt As WeLL.
WeLL, It's ABout tiMe!

## HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You can be very devoted to a cause once you embrace it. You're loyal and reliable. You're also giving and generous. You value friends, community and family. Privately, you're very sensitive. Few know the degree to which you sacrifice yourself for others. Faith is a strong component of your character. The year ahead is full of bright, new beginnings.
**Birthdate of:** Marlene Dietrich, actress; Gerard Depardieu, actor; William H. Masters, sex therapist/researcher.

**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** You feel inspired by the goodness of others . You see that positive beliefs quickly translate into positive actions. That's because everything begins with a thought.

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** You're ready to share something you have with someone . A generous impulse. Fortunately, what goes around comes around, so you can expect something back in the future.

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** You feel warm and tender about those who are close to you. You appreciate help that is extended to you; furthermore, you're ready to help others in return.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** Co-workers are helpful today. Could this be the holiday spirit? Something definitely promotes feelings of shared good will among others. This is nice.

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** Romance is very tender today. It's easy to fall in love with someone. It's also easy to appreciate those you already love. Your creative vibes are strong, too!

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** Don't be afraid to act on ideas to make where you live a little more beautiful. You want to redecorate and feel cozy at home. It's also a good time to enjoy pleasant times with family members.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** Life is inspirational now, because you see just how much love there is in your daily surroundings. People care for you, and you care for them.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** You definitely want to buy something beautiful now. All kinds of luxurious things appeal to you. Go ahead and do whatever you can swing!

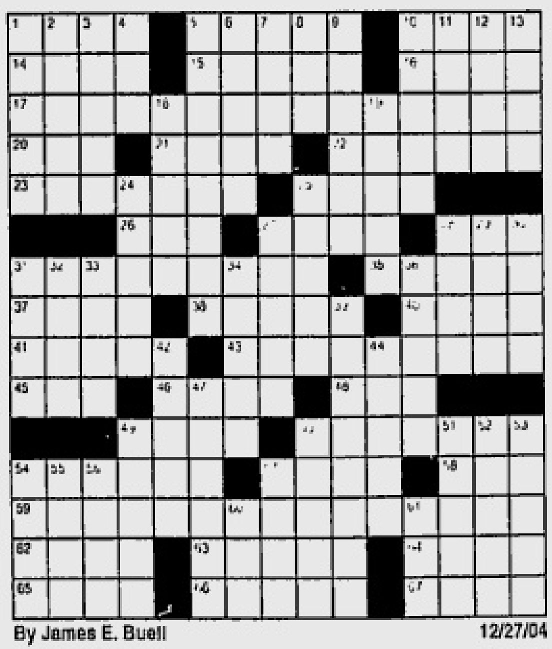
**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** Your ability to charm people is wonderful today. That's why others are attracted to you right now. You feel witty, caring and kind. (That's a combo that's hard to beat!)

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** Any time spent alone today will be time well-spent. You need a little solitude to restore your emotional strength. Life has been busy lately!

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** A friend is particularly reassuring today, and for this you are grateful. You see how much your life is enriched by knowing someone.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** Someone admires your beauty or your generosity today. You will definitely do something that impresses someone. But to you, it's no big deal. In fact, you feel modest and offhand about it.

## DAILY CROSSWORD



By James E. Buell
Edgewater, FL
12/27/04

ACROSS
1 Prunes
5 Reverberating instruments
10 Super Bowl III champs
14 Norway's capital
15 Freeze
16 Truant from the troops
17 In any case
20 Hilo garland
21 Kind of bolt or heat
22 Bilked
23 Jerks
25 Ticket scrap
26 Played first
27 Lasting impression
28 Intent
31 With 43A, in case of
35 Diver's acronym
37 Usual practice
38 Commune in Tuscany
40 Mine entrance
41 Rumbling with rumors
43 See 31A
45 ID's on jerseys
46 __-friendly
48 Self-regard
49 Rudiments
50 "Arabian Nights" fellow
54 Artist's room
57 Panache
58 Tide competitor
59 In .10 case
62 Biblical shepherd
63 Broke down
64 Catcall
65 Nuisance
66 "Demian" writer
67 Checkup

DOWN
1 Menial
2 Milo or Tessie
3 Prairie
4 Barfly
5 Offer a favorable bet
6 Atlantic or Pacific
7 Uncool kid
8 Wrigley product
9 Militant Greek city-state
10 Esau's twin
11 "Return of the Jedi" critter
12 Weighty book
13 Iditarod vehicle
18 Ford's lemon?
19 __ for the asking
24 Bungler
25 Embarrassing display
27 Very steep
28 Autobahn auto
29 Spoonbill cousin
30 Life partner
31 "__ Lake"
32 Boxcar hopper
33 Cross to bear
34 Fork points
36 Chocolate alternative
39 Capital of South Australia
42 Conductor Mehta
44 Maturing
47 Word with pine or tape
49 Rated X
50 __-Maritimes (French department)
51 Attach
52 Hobby wood
53 Chasm
54 Break
55 Option for Hamlet
56 Utah team
57 Yale alumni
60 High dudgeon
61 Steady as __ goes!

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| U | T | E | ■ | C | Z | A | R | I | S | T | ■ | C | O | B |
| P | I | N | ■ | H | O | N | O | R | E | E | ■ | O | N | O |
| T | N | T | ■ | R | U | S | T | I | E | R | ■ | X | V | I |
| E | Y | E | ■ | O | N | E | ■ | S | S | I | ■ | C | I | T |
| M | T | N | ■ | M | D | L | ■ | H | A | Y | ■ | O | D | A |
| P | I | T | B | O | S | S | ■ | S | W | A | G | M | E | N |
| O | M | E | R | ■ | ■ | ■ | P | E | E | K | A | B | O | O |
| ■ | ■ | ■ | A | M | F | M | R | A | D | I | O | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| T | E | Q | U | I | L | A | S | ■ | ■ | ■ | L | E | D | A |
| O | N | A | N | D | O | N | ■ | B | L | A | S | T | E | R |
| S | T | D | ■ | S | T | A | ■ | R | O | M | ■ | H | C | L |
| T | E | D | ■ | H | I | C | ■ | U | R | I | ■ | I | L | E |
| A | R | A | ■ | I | L | L | W | I | N | D | ■ | C | A | N |
| D | E | F | ■ | P | L | E | A | S | E | S | ■ | A | R | E |
| A | R | I | ■ | S | A | D | D | E | S | T | ■ | L | E | S |

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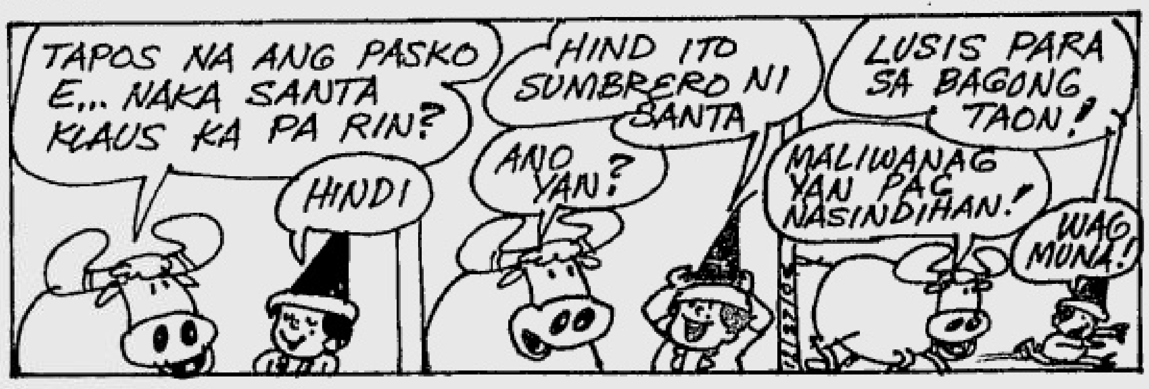
12/27/04

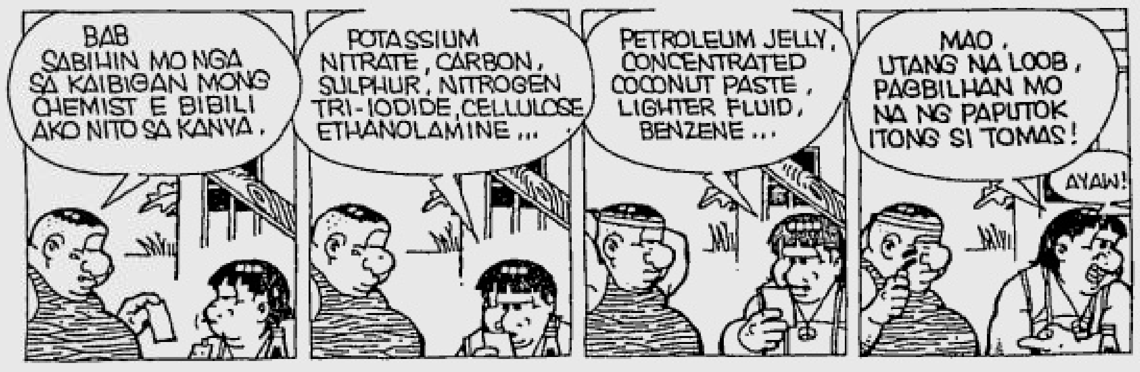
### A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TAPOS NA ANG PASKO E,.. NAKA SANTA KLAUS KA PA RIN?
HINDI
HIND ITO SUMBRERO NI SANTA
ANO YAN?
LUSIS PARA SA BAGONG TAON!
MALIWANAG YAN PAG NASINDIHAN!
WAG MUNA!

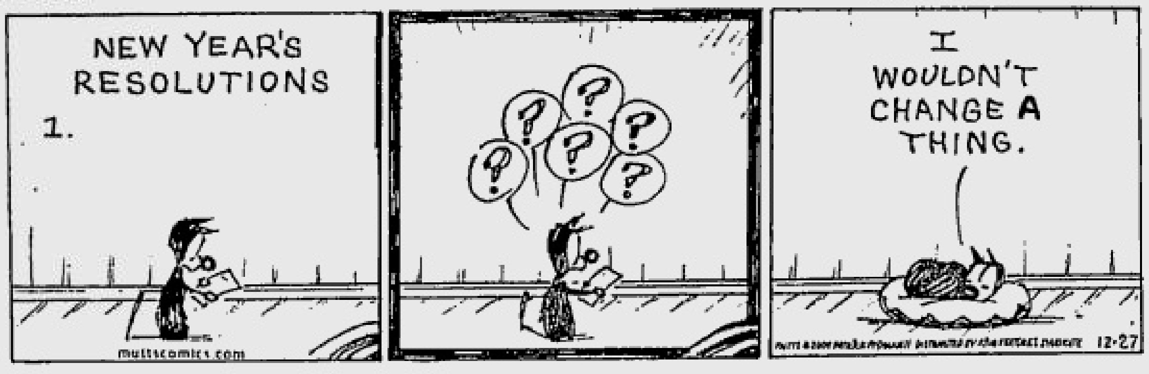
### PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


BAB SABIHIN MO NGA SA KAIBIGAN MONG CHEMIST E BIBILI AKO NITO SA KANYA.
POTASSIUM NITRATE, CARBON, SULPHUR, NITROGEN TRI-IODIDE, CELLULOSE, ETHANOLAMINE ...
PETROLEUM JELLY, CONCENTRATED COCONUT PASTE, LIGHTER FLUID, BENZENE ...
MAO. UTANG NA LOOB, PAGBILHAN MO NA NG PAPUTOK ITONG SI TOMAS!
AYAW!

### MUTTS

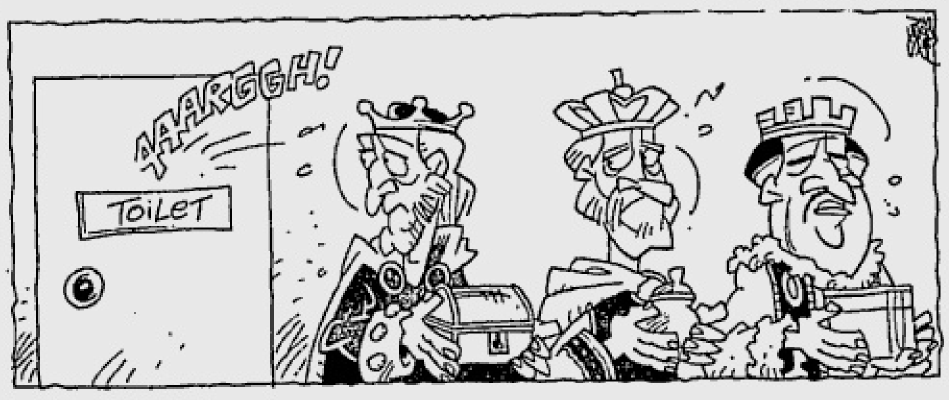
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS
1.
?
I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING.
muttscomics.com
12-27

### DIVINE COMEDY

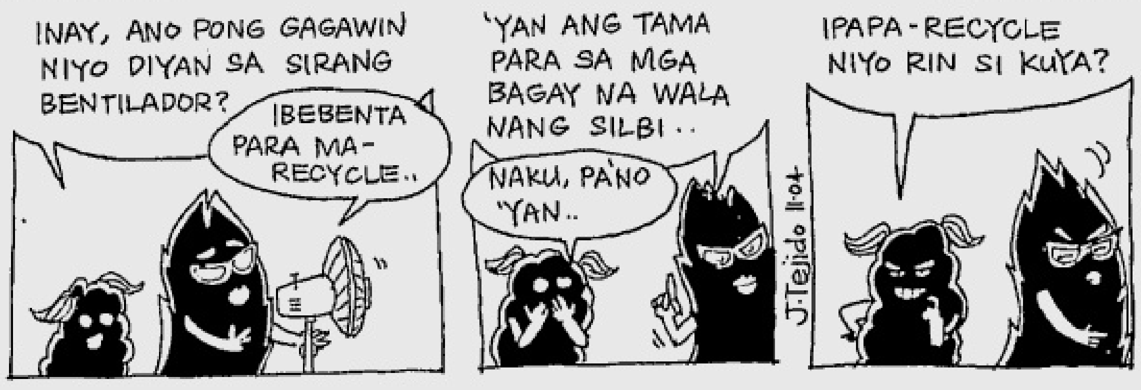
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

APAT SANA
ANG 3 KINGS
KASO NGA
LANG SUMAKIT
ANG TIYAN
NUNG ISA


AAARGGH!
TOILET

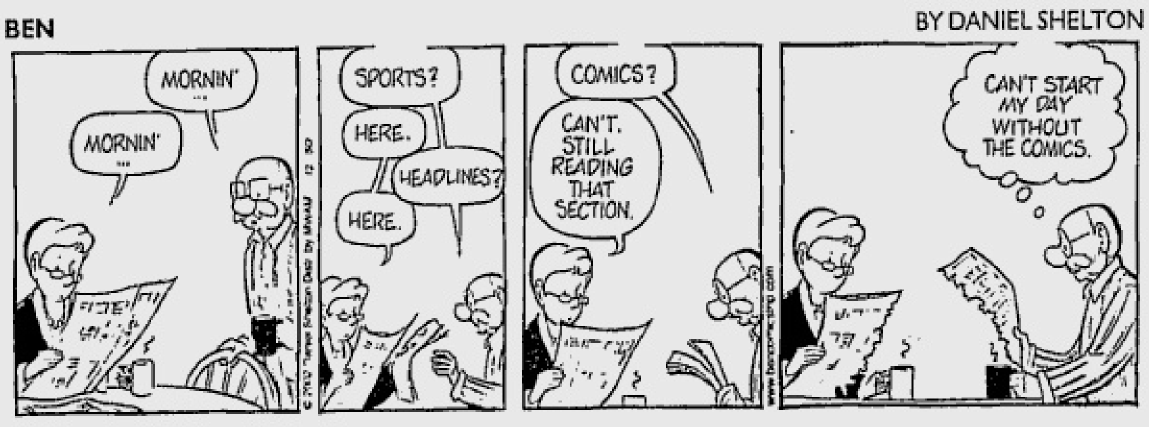
### MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


INAY, ANO PONG GAGAWIN NIYO DIYAN SA SIRANG BENTILADOR?
IBEBENTA PARA MA-RECYCLE..
'YAN ANG TAMA PARA SA MGA BAGAY NA WALA NANG SILBI..
NAKU, PA'NO 'YAN..
J. Tejido 11-04
IPAPA-RECYCLE NIYO RIN SI KUYA?

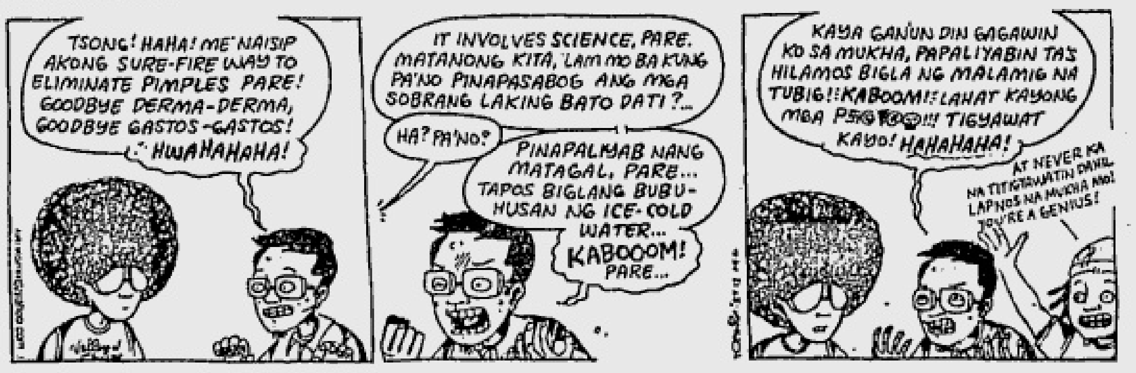
### BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MORNIN' ...
MORNIN' ...
SPORTS?
HERE.
HEADLINES?
HERE.
COMICS?
CAN'T. STILL READING THAT SECTION.
CAN'T START MY DAY WITHOUT THE COMICS.

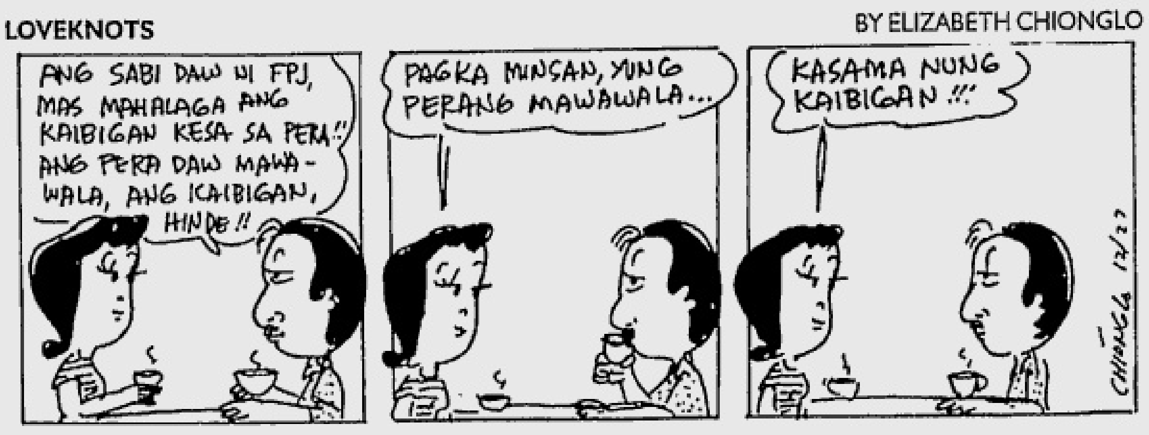
### KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG! HAHA! ME' NAISIP AKONG SURE-FIRE WAY TO ELIMINATE PIMPLES PARE! GOODBYE DERMA-DERMA, GOODBYE GASTOS-GASTOS! HWAHAHAHA!
IT INVOLVES SCIENCE, PARE. MATANONG KITA, 'LAM MO BA KUNG PA'NO PINAPASABOG ANG MGA SOBRANG LAKING BATO DATI?...
HA? PA'NO?
PINAPALIYAB NANG MATAGAL, PARE... TAPOS BIGLANG BUBUHUSAN NG ICE-COLD WATER... KABOOOM! PARE...
KAYA GANUN DIN GAGAWIN KO SA MUKHA, PAPALIYABIN TA'S HILAMOS BIGLA NG MALAMIG NA TUBIG!! KABOOM!! LAHAT KAYONG MGA P$%&!!! TIGYAWAT KAYO! HAHAHAHA!
AT NEVER KA NA TITIGYAWATIN DAHIL LAPNOS NA MUKHA MO! YOU'RE A GENIUS!

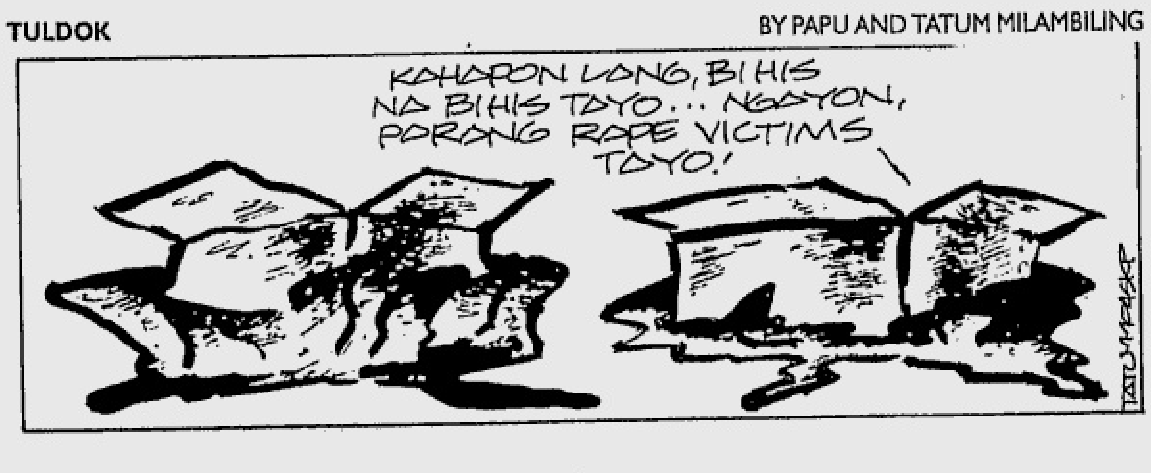
### LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

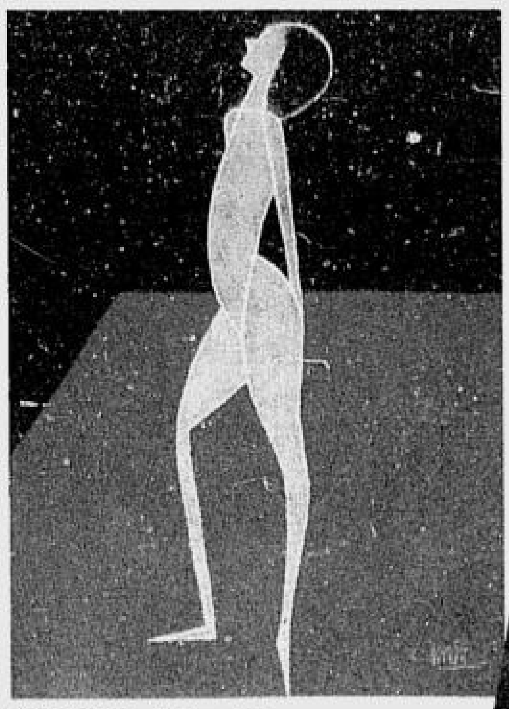

ANG SABI DAW NI FPJ, MAS MAHALAGA ANG KAIBIGAN KESA SA PERA!' ANG PERA DAW MAWAWALA, ANG KAIBIGAN, HINDE!!
PAGKA MINSAN, YUNG PERANG MAWAWALA...
KASAMA NUNG KAIBIGAN!!!
CHIONGLO 12/27

### TULDOK

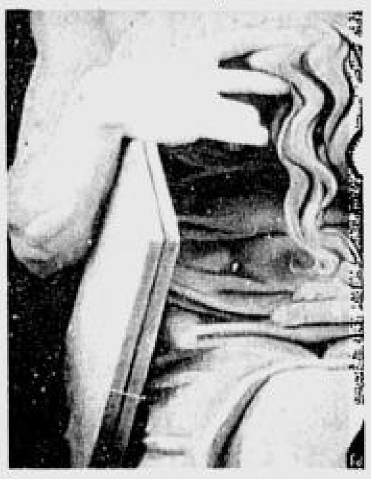
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

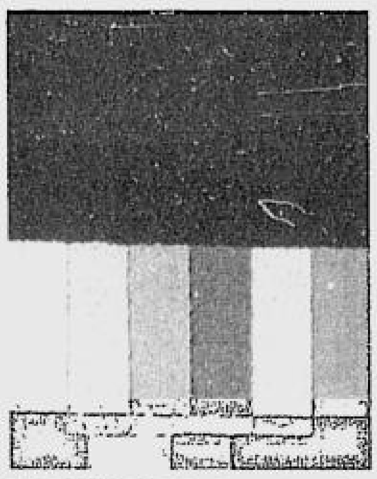

KAHAPON LANG, BIHIS NA BIHIS TAYO... NGAYON, PARANG RAPE VICTIMS TAYO!
TATUM

THE WEST Gallery is showing a veritable who's who of art world.



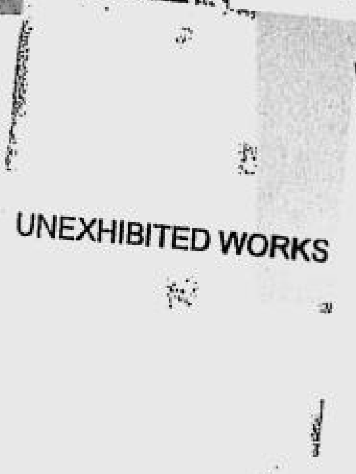
"NUDE," by Arturo Luz



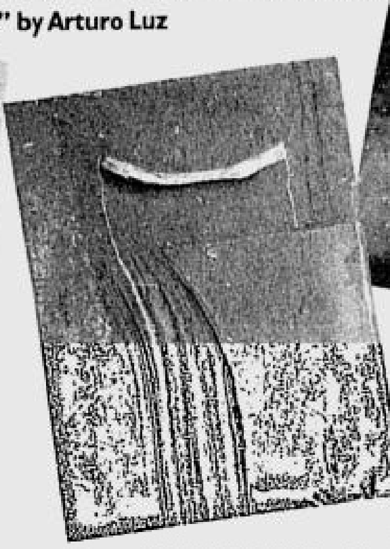


"GIGANTOR," by Bert Antonio (above); "MOSES," by Annie Cabigting (left)

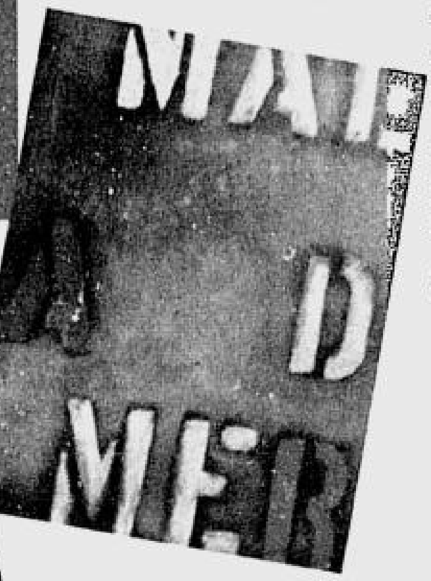
# A surfeit of glorious visuals



"UNEXHIBITED Works," by Roberto Chabet



"CYBERSPACE series," by Ronaldo Ruiz



"UNTITLED," by Ronald Achacoso

By Constantino C. Tejero

AN EXHIBIT covering the widest spectrum of artistic styles and mediums in the Philippine visual arts today is the one ongoing until Dec. 31 in two venues of West Gallery, at SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City and at Glorietta 4 in Makati City.

A veritable Who's Who of contemporary Filipino artists—from fresh art-school graduates to venerable masters—is here. The viewer is taken aback when confronted by 360 artworks of 60 artists from three generations.

Each artist invited to exhibit in the show had been asked to create six pieces in whatever medium on a uniform 12" x 9" canvas. The result is incredible, the effect on the viewer indescribable.

Prices range from the affordable to the extravagant, from P3,000-P98,000. Gallery-goers are encouraged to drop by and see for themselves which of these are great gift ideas or foolish investments.

Most of the pieces are representative of the artists' individual styles and techniques: Malang's festive-colored "Vendors"; Romulo Olazo's diaphanous still lifes of anthurium and *kasuy*; Tek Valdizno's red-on-white abstraction; Ronaldo Ruiz's "Cyberspace"; José John Santos' surreal portraits; Jojo Lofranco's Fauvist and monochromatic abstracts; Lydia Velasco's incandescent maidens; Ronald Ventura's photorealist nudes; Pete Jimenez's found-steel "Mailbox"; Soler's "Stone Garden"; Cid Reyes' "Summer Landscape"; Dan Raralio's relief-paintings; the expressionistic portraits of Manny Garibay and Andres Barrioquinto.

Some of the pieces are quite notable, even if they're in mini forms and jumbled on the wall: National Artist Arturo Luz's orange-ochre-black "Nude"; Nunelucio Alvarado's series of complex patterns; Pandy Aviado's "Tangram"; Wire Tuazon's "White Christmas"; Bert Antonio's geometric abstraction; Annie Cabigting's "Moses"; the startling bas-reliefs of Eric Zamuco, Chitz Ramirez, Gerry Tan and Reggie Yuson; and the monochromatic abstractions of Jonathan Olazo, Tony Leaño, Alfredo Aquilizan, Roy Veneracion and Nona Garcia.

The most surprising, hands down, is Roberto Chabet's series "Unexhibited Works." It consists of rectangular mirrors with the inscription *Unexhibited Works* cutting crosswise like an intertitle, no more, no less.

We thought at first these were merely notices referring to the artworks on display, until we did a double take, and were led to contemplation. This is the kind of art that both delights and outrages, depending on the viewer's capacity to absorb.

We don't know, though, if it's wise of Chabet, who's also the exhibit's curator, to display such surfeit of glorious visuals mounted edge to edge on the walls of two cramped rooms. It leaves no breathing space, as it were, and a piece of art is better appreciated when left isolate.

But then, of course, the man must have a different concept of art appreciation.

# Angel works in Baguio and Le Soufflé, Eng Chan in UP Vargas Museum

## VISUAL ARTS

EIGHT Baguio-based artists exhibit works in sculpture, paint and photo form in "Araw ng mga Anghel" at the Blissspace of Bliss Café (Woods Place Inn, 38 Military Cut Off Rd., Baguio City) until Jan. 21, 2005. Call (074)4424641.

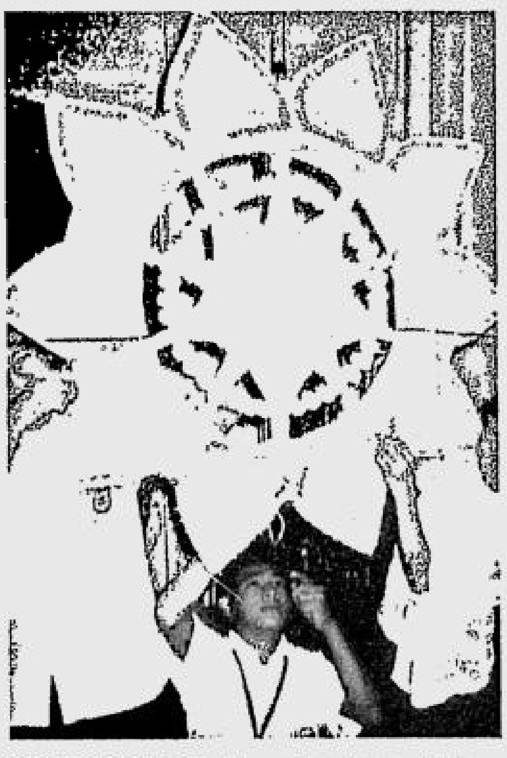
LE SOUFFLÉ Restaurant features Joana Regina Lontoc Alberto's paintings on angels until Dec. 31. The artworks are also showcased in Angels 2005 calendar, which can be purchased for P100. Proceeds will go to the Ephesus Home for Girls in Guiguinto, Bulacan. Call 0917-8176919 or 8126124.

UP Vargas Museum is showing "After the Fact" in its The Edge Gallery until Jan. 7. In it, Juan Alcazaren combines installations, paintings and collages. On one long wall of the Vargas gallery, Alcazaren designs a huge collage mural that reworks his animation cells: stills on sheets of transparencies on which he drew as part of moving images for advertisements or video animation. He places unrelated images together that seems an experiment on displaced materials and merges them with layers of other images, guided by colors, shapes and instinct. He also modified some of the museum's furniture and space to fit them in his scheme of things.

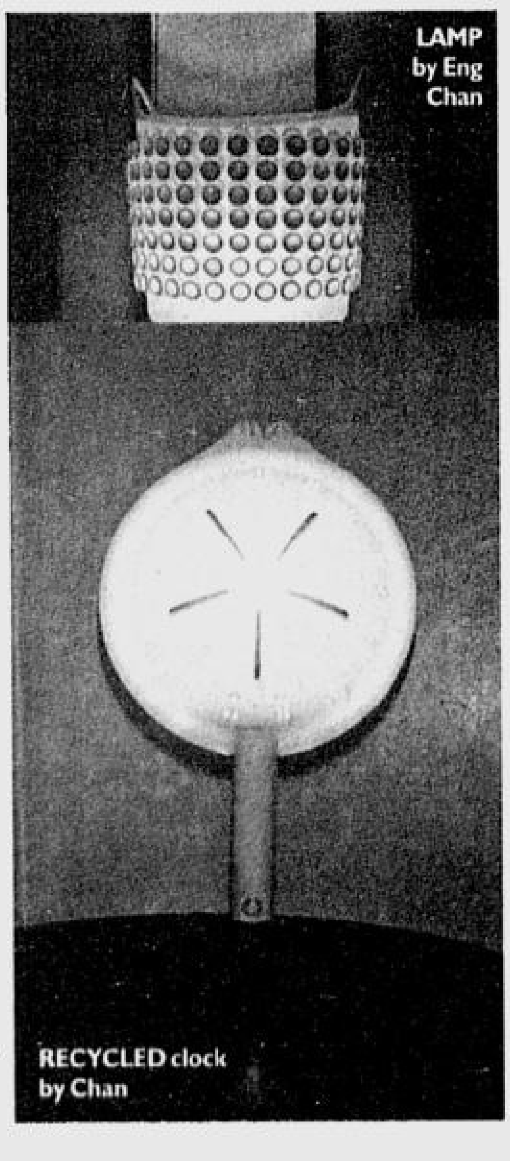
ENG CHAN'S has built 27 sculptures from predominantly junked plastic parts of appliances and water bottles as well as scrap metals and other discarded materials. They are on show in "Plastic" at the UP Vargas Museum's Lobby Gallery. Putting them together, according to Chan, is like child's play involving Lego pieces: eventually seemingly dissimilar parts can go together. Chan adds a twist to his assemblages by illuminating them with tiny electric bulbs and reflective materials. Call 9281927 or 9205301.

SAMMY Kilat, Pete Cortes and Camille Dacanay are the "Three Potters," whose latest clay creations are on exhibit until Dec. 29 at Gallery 139, 3/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. Each artist interprets a bowl, vase or jar. Call 7289724.

GALERIA de las Islas is also mounting Antonio Doctor Garcia's "Noon at Ngayon" until Jan. 31, 2005 at the Ilustrado Restaurant, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila. The exhibit showcases Garcia's drawings and watercolor paintings from 1990 to the present. His subjects include landscapes, seascapes, old houses and Philippine churches. A 25-percent discount is offered on the artworks. Call 5272113.



**THE UNIQUE Christmas lanterns of the Bauan High School are on exhibit at the second floor of the Cultural Center of the Philippines until Jan. 6, 2005. The lanterns produced by the students use indigenous and recyclable materials such as betel nuts, garlic cloves, onions, fish scales, bones, loofah, lemon peel, *calamansi* seeds, pineapple fiber, dried leaves, grains, uncooked pasta, even used cigarette butts. Above is a *parol* made of corn grain.**



LAMP by Eng Chan

RECYCLED clock by Chan

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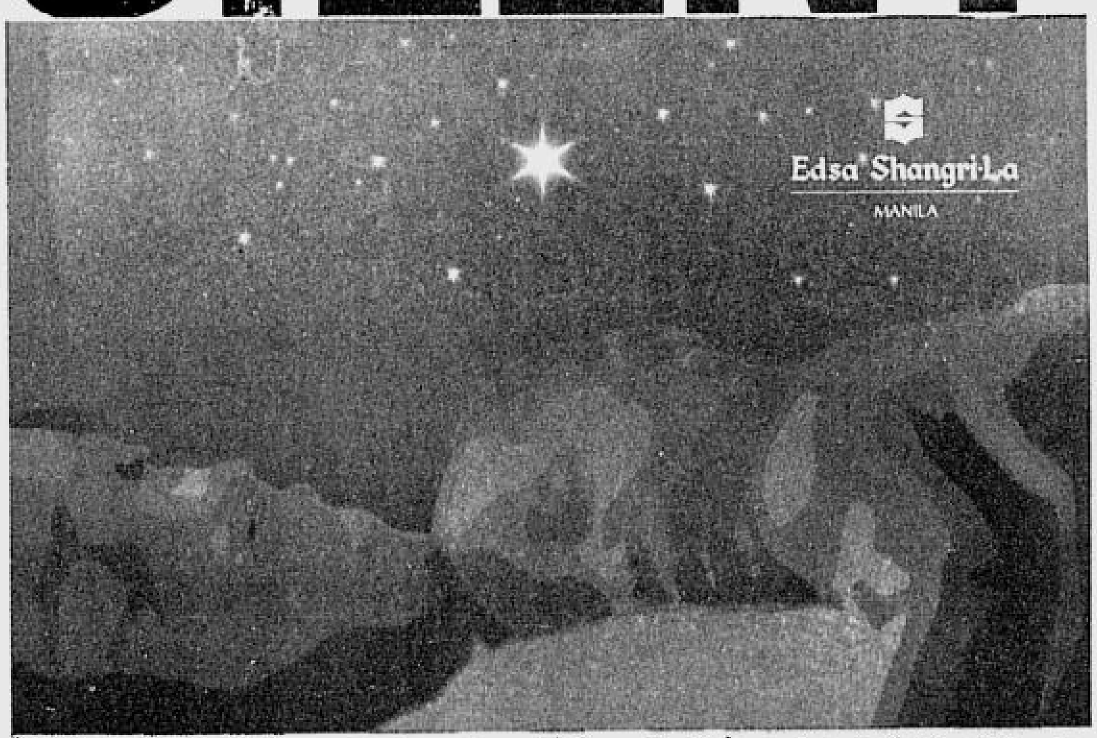

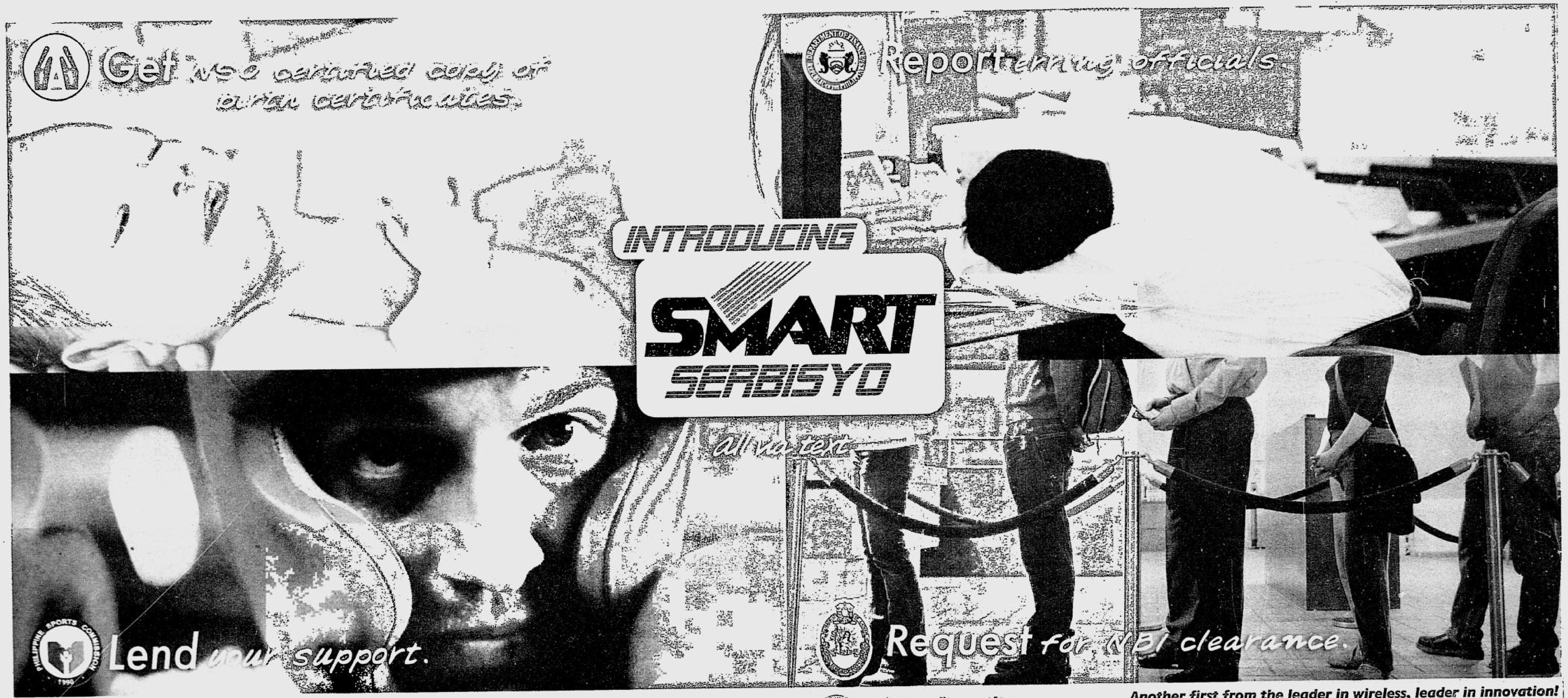

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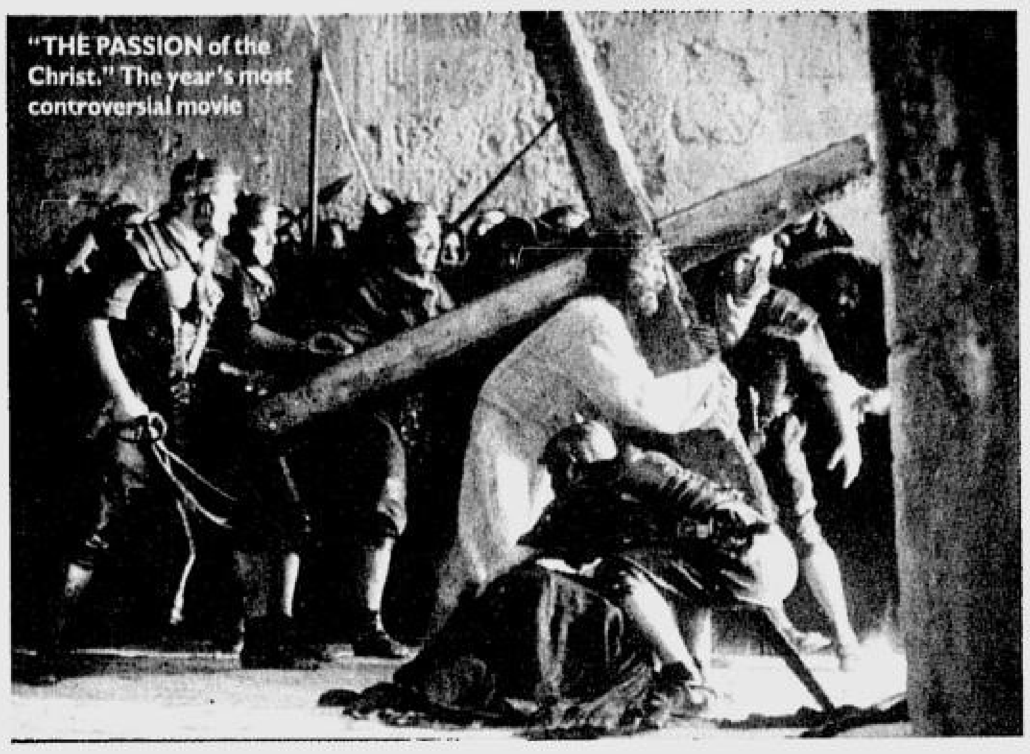
"THE PASSION of the Christ." The year's most controversial movie

"BEFORE Sunset." Best sequel of the year

ROBIN Padilla in experimental digital feature, "Astig"

## LOCAL AND FOREIGN

# The most notable movies of 2004

ANGELICA Panganiban in "Santa Santita," an objective look at folk Catholicism

**By Lito B. Zulueta**

THERE are really no good movies, only notable movies. If one bears this in mind, then one can skip the predictable list of the best movies of the year churned out by reviewers who outbid one another in tacking superlatives on movies that may or may not deserve them. Exaggerated praise, after all, does not help the audience appreciate the cinema. They hardly explain that the appreciation and understanding of cinema is largely conditioned by the moment and the milieu.

This list therefore cites the notable movies, Filipino or foreign, shown in Philippine cinemas in 2004. They are "notable" because in the moment of time that was 2004 and in the social geography in which they were shown, they provided contexts and insights that enabled their viewers to grasp cinema's power of image and representation, its ability to conjure a world of deeply human struggles and promise.

The "Lord of the Rings" series receives the penultimate wrap-up in "The Return of the King. Although it is wrong to look at the "Rings" movies as a series comprising a trilogy since J.R.R. Tolkien really wrote the novels as one extended narrative, "Return" is a fitting climax to the breathtaking film adaptation by Peter Jackson. As cinema, it certifies the power of technology to invoke alternative worlds. As myth, it shows that the best literature—and the best cinema (pardon the superlative)—is morally charged.

Despite its tendencies toward melodrama, "Milan" is notable for its depiction of the gains and losses of Filipino expatriate workers. The occasional docu-drama touches provide a foil to the movie's romantic bias. The dedicated performances of Piolo Pascual and Claudine Barretto endow the movie with a ringing passion.

Jeffrey Jeturian's "Minsan Pa" and Cesar Montano's "Panaghoy sa Suba (Wail on the River)" are notable movies for using Cebuano without apologies (but with English subtitles). Aside from their linguistic conceit, they are also powerful and even innovative movies. "Minsan Pa" follows a Cebu tourist guide's peregrinations through life amid the contradictions of

THE MOST/ E3

Other notables: 'Ebolusyon ng Isang Pamilyang Pilipino,' 'Zatoichi,' 'Twilight Samurai' and '2046'

"SABEL," bold but reductionist movie on lesbianism

"MILAN." Gains and losses of Filipino expatriate labor

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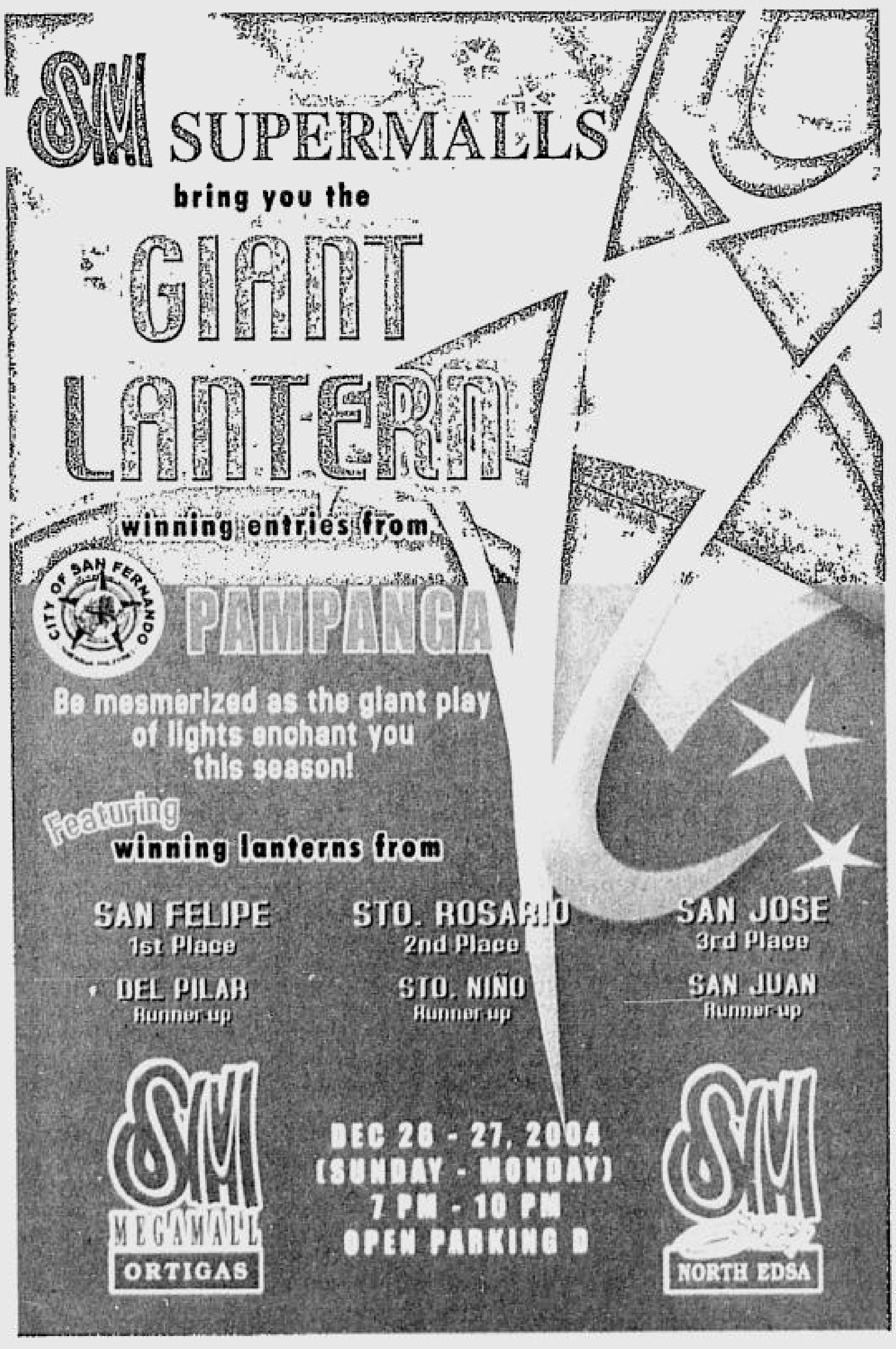
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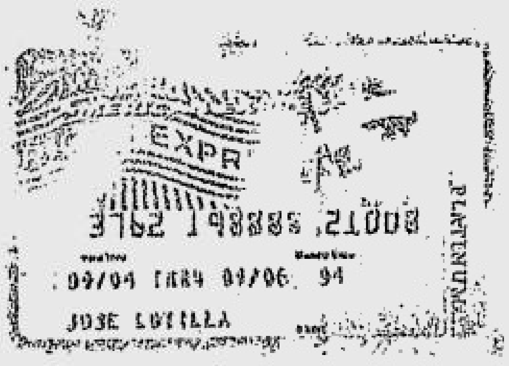

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**TEATRO** Mulat ng Pilipinas with founder Amelia Lapeña

**CARA** Barredo as Dorothy in Rep's "The Wizard of Oz"

**TANGHALANG** Pilipino's "Himala" was restaged for the National Theater Festival

# Best shows of the last quarter

**By Amadís Ma. Guerrero**
*Contributor*

MUSIC—that most appealing of all the art forms—occupied centerstage during the fourth quarter of the year. And the third National Theater Festival (NTF), held at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and other venues, and funded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), had a strong musical orientation.

The NTF was a highlight of the period under review if not of the year.

The festival featured musical plays and modern *zarzuelas*, children's musicals, performance by regional troupes, stand-up comedy routines and late-night shows, and ambassadors of goodwill like the Vienna Boys Choir and the Tian Jin Children's Peking Opera Troupe.

Performing with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO) under Eugene Castillo, California-based Linda Wang, petite but wielding a mean violin, elicited wild cheers from the audience. And, in another concert with the PPO, featuring distinguished pianist Raul Sunico, so did the University of Santo Tomas Percussionists.

The 12 percussionists led by Arnel Feliciano, caparisoned in Mexican costumes, did a Mexican number annotated by the Mexican ambassador. The American ambassador likewise introduced an American composition. There were also Russian and English works. So where were the Russian and UK ambassadors?

If there are children's musicals, can children's choirs be far behind? At the big Aliw Theater in the CCP Complex, we had two of the finest choirs in the world: the Vienna Boys Choir, under the direction of Martin Schebesta; and the Loboc Children's Choir, conducted by Alma Fernando-Taldo.

So, who's the better choir? Now, don't be silly. There is no room for comparison because one choir is all-male, while the other is mixed. Suffice it say that both choirs do their respective countries proud.

## Voices from Bohol

At the CCP's Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino, the major offering of the Loboc Children's Choir was "Calenda de Loboc," a traditional Christmas presentation of the town of Loboc which is solemn and festive by turns. It has a fiesta-like atmosphere featuring carolers, dancers, a priest celebrating Mass, maestros and *cantores*, *rondallas* and the Loboc Brass Band.

Stage direction was by the noted composer from Bohol, Lutgardo "Gardy" Labad, a Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) alumnus.

The classic fairy tale "Pinnochio" was given a delightful rendering by Repertory Philippines (at Greenbelt OnStage) as musical theater, and as dance by Ballet Manila at Star Theater.

Another classic for children, Pinoy this time and socially conscious, "Pepe 'n Pilar," was staged by Gantimpala Theater Foundation at St. Scholastica's St. Cecilia Hall. The play grappled with social issues, like the plight of streetchildren, even as it imparted values to children. The engaging original music was by Bong Rosario, Roy Regalado and Vincent de Jesus.

Another blue-ribbon Repertory Philippines production was the memory-provoking "The Wizard of Oz" which, after six decades, continues to captivate, propelled by the immortal song "Over the Rainbow." Liezl Batucan and Cara Barredo alternated as Dorothy, the young heroine. And for its 68th season in 2005, the Rep has lined up three musicals: "The Little Shop of Horrors," "The Emperor's New Clothes" and "Man of La Mancha."

## Formidable music

"Buhay!" gave the audience at CCP's Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo a sampling of the formidable accomplishments of our contemporary composers and lyricists (in Filipino and English). Performers were mostly from PhilStage, a conglomerate of 11 leading performing arts companies. Noni Buencano proved himself a complete performer.

There were delightful numbers from "Katy!" as engagingly performed by May Bayot (she with the powerful voice), Mitch Valdes and Pinky Marquez. This musical is crying out to be revived. Paging Nestor Torre and Musical Theater Philippines.

Also nostalgic in a way but in a more militant vein was "Hanas!," a revue of the protest songs of the 1970s and 1980s, as performed by activists and nationalist groups like Noel Cabangon, Jess Santiago, Tambisan and Patatag, along with regional troupes.

Philippine Ballet Theater scored with "Isang Bagong Bituin," set to the beautiful music of Willy Cruz, and the pulsating "Carmina Burana," the young dancers whipped into shape by Russian resident ballet master Anatoly Panasyukov. The company has some fine soloists like Abigail Tan, Aileen Gallinera, Michelle Navarro, Ronilo Jaynario et al. Choreography by Gener Caringal, libretto and lighting design by the versatile Dennis Marasigan.

**VIENNA** Boys Choir

Frank Rivera's Sining Kambayoka and Joonee Gamboa's Barasoain Kalinangan Foundation are two of our finest regional groups. The latter's contribution to NTF was "Nang Mabasag ang Banga," the love story of National Artists Atang de la Rama and Amado V. Hernandez (directed by Armando Santa Ana at CCP's Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino). Music by Arnel del Rosario and libretto by Joseph Cristobal.

The *zarzuela* was patriotic yet entertaining, with outrageous mugging. Singing actress Maria Irene Crisostomo shone in the role of Atang.

With practitioners like Bien Lumbera, Frank Rivera and Lucien Letaba, the modern Filipino *zarzuela* is alive and well.

The plays of the New Voice Company have always been provocative and theme-driven. In the erotic "Cabaret" (directed by Rito Asilo and Monique Wilson at Music Museum), the theme is somber: Hitler's rise to power in the early 1930s.

The ensemble headed by the Wilson siblings (Monique and Jamie) and Joy Virata gave it all they got, singing, acting and dancing up a storm. But the talented Joel Trinidad was wasted in a nonrole.

The year ended with a straight play about gays: "Laró" by Gantimpala Theater Foundation at CCP's Tanghalang Huseng Batute, directed by Floy Quintos. The focus was on often tense and sometimes violent relationships, with an all-male cast giving highly charged performances.

As the Modelo, hunk Neil Ryan Sese exuded both virility and sensitivity; he is a real theater find. "Laró" will have repeats in January and February. It was adapted by Quintos and Miguel Castro (one of the actors) from Arthur Schnitzler's "La Ronde."

The coming year begins with an upbeat note: the first national conference-festival known as Karangalan (Honor), to be held at the CCP on Jan. 21-23.

As convenor Nicanor Perlas puts it, the conference-festival seeks "to mobilize excellence to create a visionary Philippines and to dispel the hopelessness gripping the country." There will be speeches by community leaders, artists and achievers followed by creative responses in music, dance and drama; exhibits, discussion groups and workshops.

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**MICHAEL** Williams

**MIGUEL** Faustmann

**PINKY** Amador

# Repertory announces 2005 season program

STILL recovering from the loss of its president and artistic director, Zeneida Amador, Repertory Philippines, now on its 38th year, has announced its schedule of productions for the new year—a program that had been prepared by Amador before she died. All productions are being presented in cooperation with the City of Makati.

On Jan. 14 will be the Asian premiere of "Oh Romeo" written by Ephraim Kishon who has been called Israel's "National Humorist." It will be directed by Joy Virata. In this zany farce, Romeo and Juliet didn't die, get married and live happily ever after—with William Shakespeare managing to keep himself in the picture. Pinky Amador, Michael Williams and Miguel Faustmann star in this play.

"Busybody," a comedy thriller by Jack Popple, opens on Feb. 11. A disappearing body, an interfering cleaning lady and a bossy detective make for a crazy whodunit that will chase anybody's blues away. Michael Williams directs.

"Busybody" will be followed by a revival of one of REP's most successful musical comedies of many years ago—the lively "Little Shop of Horrors" (written by Howard Ashman with music by Alan Menken) on March 4. Baby Barredo will direct this unusual musical comedy about an unusual plant.

Barredo will direct still another comedy that will end the first half of the year—the Olivier Award-winning "Whose Wife Is It Anyway?" by Ray Cooney, which opens on April 8. A dashing British Member of Parliament, his nervous aide, their three funny honeys and a dead body make up this physical comedy.

All plays run on Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., and on Sundays at 3:30 p.m.

The REP Children's Theater production of the "Emperor's New Clothes" by Jeanne Bargy and Jim Eiler, will open on Aug. 6 and run until October.

Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew," directed by Bart Guingona, opens Sept. 2. It will have special subscriber performances on Sept. 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. and Sept. 4 and 25 at 3:30 p.m.

The final production for the year will be one of the most popular and best-loved Broadway musicals of all time—"Man of La Mancha," which will be directed by Barredo.

"Man of La Mancha" was written by Dale Wasserman with music by Mitch Leigh and lyrics by Joe Darton based on the book "Don Quixote de la Mancha" by Miguel de Cervantes. One of the world's most famous songs, "Impossible Dream," is part of this musical.

All plays will be staged at REP's Globe Theater at Onstage in Greenbelt 1. Season and Year passes, which give sizable discounts, are available at the REP office (Karrivin Plaza 2316 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City; tel. 887-0710), Greenbelt 1 ticket booth and all Ayala Commercial Center ticket outlets.

# The most notable movies of 2004

From page E1

the tourism industry. "Panaghoy" is a period movie that conjures the romance of Bohol, its generous natural endowments, and its rich history. If Montano's direction is sometimes wobbly, his artistic conviction and love for Bohol more than make up for it.

Maryo J. de los Reyes's "Naglalayag" is a mature look at an old woman's relationship with a young man, a problematic on desire and age. Joel Lamangan's "Sabel" is notable for tackling lesbianism, and while one may be discomfitted with the movie's reductionism, it's a bold movie. Lav Diaz's "Ebolusyon ng Isang Pamilyang Pilipino" is the boldest conceit in Filipino filmmaking yet this century: It's 10 hours long and it was made in the course of 10 years. It reaffirms Diaz's position as one of the country's most exciting new cinematic voices.

## Going digital

Jon Red's "Astig," shown during the 2004 Cinemanila International Film Festival, has its own multisided conceit: It is a full-length experimental digital movie about an assassin who suffers from astigmatism. The story is seen from the point of view of the protagonist, who works as a cameraman when he's not a killer-for-hire. The action in the film is dynamic, and the improvisatory quality plus the frontiersmen dimension of digital filmmaking revives the *cinema verite* style with spunk and wit. Robin Padilla delivers an unsentimental performance.

The other notable full-length video movie of the year is "Santa Santita," Laurice Guillen's high-resolution digital film about a miracle worker. It is a refreshing film because it does not have the cynicism often seen in other Filipino movies that, without even the modicum of research and open-mindedness, often look down on folk Catholicism. This is a religious film that does not evade the issues.

Takeshi Kitano's "Zatoichi" takes after the spirit of the character of "Astig." Shown during the 2004 Cinemanila International Film Festival, this crowd-pleasing Japanese movie, which is breaking box-office records for an Asian movie in Europe and the United States, revives the 1960s film series featuring Shintaro Katsu as the blind master swordsman in feudal Japan. As played by Kitano, the character is recast with a grittier contemporary flavor. Because of the Japanese penchant for sight-challenged heroes, it's not surprising that "Astig" was invited to the 17th Tokyo International Film Festival last October. "Astig" and "Zatoichi" are twins that show the paradox of filmmaking: in order to see, one must "un-see."

The samurai motif is provided a wizened and coruscating edge in Yoji Yamada's "Twilight Samurai," which was the most notable movie in the Eiga Sai, the Japanese film festival organized twice a year by the Japan Foundation Manila. The movie balances the serious and the comic in its depiction of a samurai in the difficult Meiji transition, who has to struggle in the face of poverty and domestic duties in order to serve his master and fulfill the samurai code of honor. The poignant realism of this film has made it the first Japanese film to be nominated for the Oscar best foreign language film in over a decade.

## Best sequel

"PANAGHOY sa Suba" may yet revive Cebuano cinema.

The best film sequel of the year is "Before Sunset," which reunites "Before Sunrise" characters Jesse and Celine 10 years after their brief encounter in Paris in which they promised to rendezvous in Vienna.

The tryst didn't take place, as we learn from the sequel, which sees them hooking up again during the Paris book tour of Jesse, who has written a successful novel that barely disguises the encounter 10 years back. Again pressed for time since he has to catch his flight, Jesse and Celine reacquaint themselves with one another and struggle to piece together the high points of their first meeting, so that the audience finds out that Celine has become selective in her memory, humiliating Jesse, for example, by denying they had sex ("We had it twice, remember!" he protests). The denial of course merely masks her frustrations and disappointments in life, just as his publishing achievement and successful marriage obscure his regrets and longings. The film has no big revelations to make, but the interest of the audience is sustained because of the refreshing naturalism, Richard Linklater's sure direction, and the incredible chemistry between the actors, Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy, who have literally grown old but wrinkly beautiful, and wiser, in their characters. The end is inconclusive, and the audience is thankful that there's no sunset yet to what is emerging as a most intriguing film series.

TAKESHI Kitano in "Zatoichi"

Regret, too, is the theme of Wong Kar Wai's "2046," about a journalist in the 1960s who writes a futuristic novel (the title of the film) about a mysterious train that regularly goes to 2046, but with the passengers never quite making the trip back. The title has political overtones, as it is the year Hong Kong will fully revert to China, under the Sino-British agreement. But since the title also refers to the protagonist's room number, where he writes and conducts his lustful conquests of women, one of whom is a prostitute who falls in love with him but who realizes, much to his regret later, she's marginal in his world, the movie is really about memory and its tremendous faculty to foster guilt and regret, its paradoxical capacity to recover what had been ultimately lost in the past, the recovery deepening the sense of loss. Wong's slick filmmaking is very evident here, sometimes to annoying proportions: He seems a master in framing fashion advertisement—prone scenes and sequences, backed by retro music, so that the characters look like mannequins and nothing more, the movie like an extended musical video. But the actors provide the logic and flesh to Wong's mishmash of styles and sounds. If, for anything else, this is a star-studded Asian movie—with fantastic performances by Tony Leung, Zhang Ziyi and Faye Wong-Wong staples—plus the Japanese matinee idol Takuya Kimura.

"2046," Wong Kar Wai's stylish movie on memory and regret

If only for the controversy that it generates up to now, the most notable movie of the year is "The Passion of the Christ." Critics have branded Mel Gibson's depiction of Christ's torture and crucifixion as a glorification of violence and an anti-Semitic tract. The first criticism shows how the secular, liberal world has sanitized the Christian message and jettisoned its redemptive import on human suffering and pain. The second criticism misses the materiality or historical moorings of Christ's incarnation, of God becoming a Jew in order to be crucified by Jews, as well as the eschatological significance of God intervening in human history by becoming himself a historical player: humanity redeemed by a history founded in the past and transcended in the future. The condemnation suffered by the movie shows how the discourse against anti-Semitism has been commandeered by the anti-Christ. "The Passion" is a religious movie, and more.

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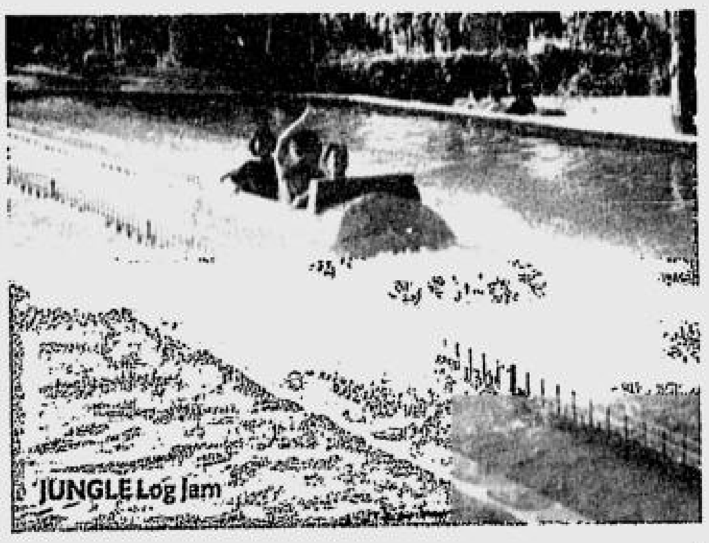
JUNGLE Log Jam

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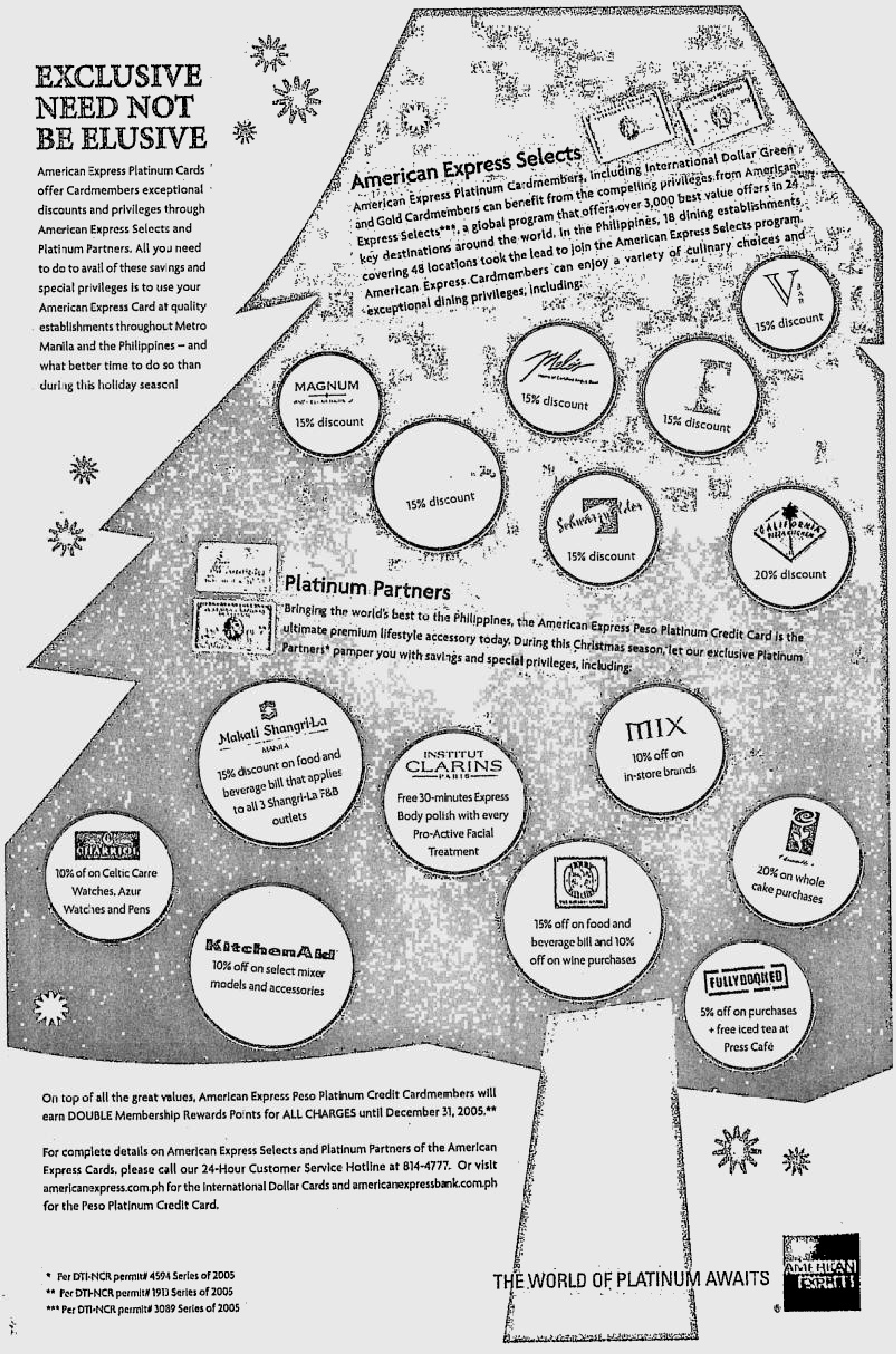
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THE WORLD OF PLATINUM AWAITS

AMERICAN EXPRESS

# The 'Beasts' before war

"Garden of Beasts: A Novel of Berlin 1936"
*By Jeffery Deaver*
*Simon & Schuster, New York,*
*2004, 404 pages*

**By Ruel S. De Vera**

DESPITE the fact that the thriller has always been a popular genre in the bestseller stacks, some craftsmen are more equal than others. One of these standouts is prize-winning Jeffery Deaver, the author of the forensic thriller "The Bone Collector," later adapted into the Denzel Washington movie.

If "Garden of Beasts: A Novel of Berlin 1936" is any indication, then one can surmise that Deaver is successful in the cash register because he covers that extra base. While many of his better-known novels ("The Bone Collector" included) feature his recurring characters, Lincoln Rhyme and Amelia Sachs, "Beasts" is something of a calculated departure for Deaver, a risk that pays off for the most part.

As the title implies, "Beasts" takes place most in Berlin of 1936, right before the outbreak of the Second World War. Berlin, as depicted through Deaver's well-researched and detailed passages, is a beautiful place full of history and culture that is slowly, inexorably being possessed by the hateful spirit of a fanatical leader. Under this cover, a hidden army stirs.

Except that US government types decide that the war machine Adolf Hitler is building must be stopped somehow. After few back-alley discussions, an audacious plan is formed. A hired killer—a "button man"—will be sent in disguise to Berlin, not to kill Hitler, but to kill Col. Reinhard Ernst, the most vital cog in Hitler's war machine.

But this is no ordinary button man they've hired. Paul Schumann, a hitman of German descent and thus fluent in the language, is a skilled boxer and a crack shot. But more than anything else, Schumann is a killer with a conscience. He only accepts assignments to kill those he believes are bad people, seeing himself more as an instrument "correcting God's mistakes." In exchange for a pardon for his past crimes and a bounty of cold cash, he agrees to the dangerous and shadowy plan.

> Full of texture and vivid characters, Jeffery Deaver's World War II thriller may be predictable in parts, but readers won't see what's really coming

Which is how Schumann winds up disguised as a freelance sportswriter on his way to Berlin on the S.S. Manhattan, ostensibly to cover the Berlin Olympics. But things go awry almost from the very beginning, and even as Schumann hits the ground running in Berlin, there is the nagging feeling that something is wrong. Aside from that fact that he seems to be falling in love with a vulnerable and intelligent German woman, Käthe Richter, Schumann starts to get hints that instead of being a cruel warmonger, Ernst might actually be an enlightened soul doing his bit to save lives. Add to that the fact that a grizzled German police inspector named Willi Kohl is on Schumann's trail and Kohl may have more tricks up his sleeve than Schumann has.

JEFFERY DEAVER
GARDEN of BEASTS

## Satisfying complex thread

Deaver succeeds in creating a satisfying complex thread of events, peppering the narrative with encounters with real historical figures. Aside from the obvious appearances by the likes of Hitler and Herman Göring, there are vignettes with Olympic hero Jesse Owens. Deaver takes the effort to truly raise Berlin from the ashes of war and history, bringing back to life bustling streets and busy restaurants, but with the specter of Hitler's holocaust in the horizon.

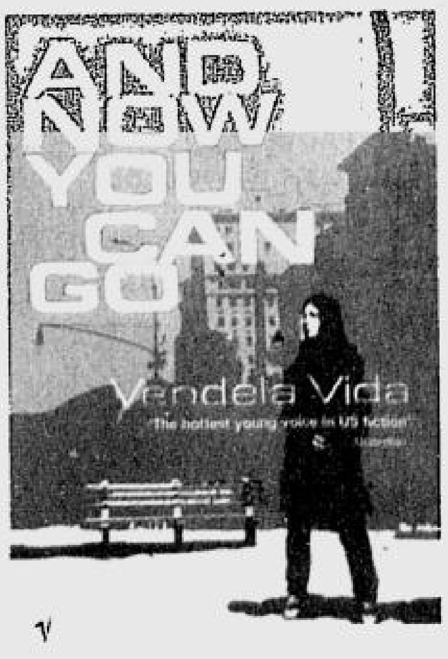
"Beasts" is a lively, efficient read, a book that draws the reader in and won't let go easy-an intelligent airport read. Most of this is due to the vivid characters Deaver employs. Ernst, it seems, is truly hard to pin down; he's somewhere between patriotic pacifist and scientist soldier. Or is he? Otto Webber, a crafty Berlin crook, offers many occasions for enjoyable little incidents. Kohl is yet another well-carved cast member.

But mostly, it's because of Schumann, the finely tuned and yet still very human protagonist. The square-jawed Yank seems a bit too much of a good thing, but Deaver employs his white knight without fear. Formidable and conscientious, Schumann may be a peerless character, but, between his back story and his prowess, makes for an easy hero to root for.

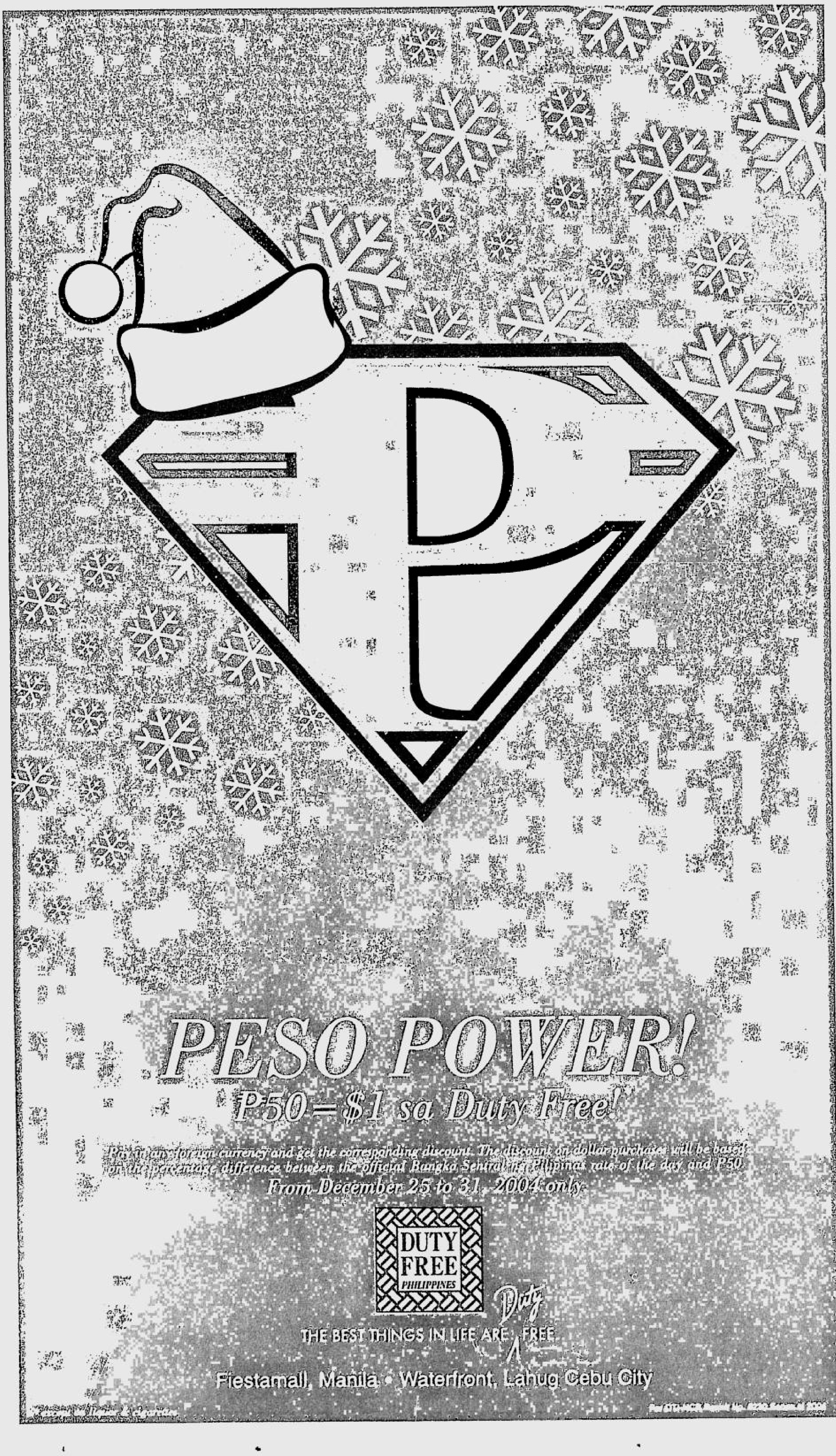
Perhaps the best thing about "Beasts" aside from its locale is the enigmatic nature of the supporting characters. Schumann we know, but everyone else, from Webber to Richter and, yes, even Ernst and Kohl, is under suspicion. Deaver effectively uses this aspect of his characters to set up the conflict at the heart of "Beasts": Who are the real monsters in this atypical morality tale?

The veteran Deaver also displays his lean and mean plotting to good effect. But too much of the book relies on a confluence of coincidences that just too perfect to be believable. This, unfortunately, results in Deaver telegraphing some of his punches, the reader seeing what he's trying to do before he gets to do it. But, even if the reader is on to that, there is a particularly dramatic set of twists right at the book's climax that literally turns "Beasts" on its head, and no one will see it coming.

*Available at National Book Store and PowerBooks.*



**THE POWERBOOKS'** book of the month is "And Now You Can Go," by Vendela Vida and published by Viking. It tells the story of a 21-year-old woman held at gunpoint and survives the incident but is traumatized by it. Until one day, she travels with her mother, a nurse, to the Philippines, and is illuminated. PowerBooks is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428), Megamall (6352898), Alabang (8505662) and Glorietta (7527075).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## Automatic CENTRE

# PLASMA PLEASURES THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBIT has come to town

JUST as Santa Claus is spreading joys and cheers with his gifts to kids and families alike as he comes to town this Christmas season, Automatic Centre is also rolling out the red carpet for Filipino families living south of Metro Manila with the second leg of its 'Plasma Pleasures' exhibit at the Alabang Town Center.

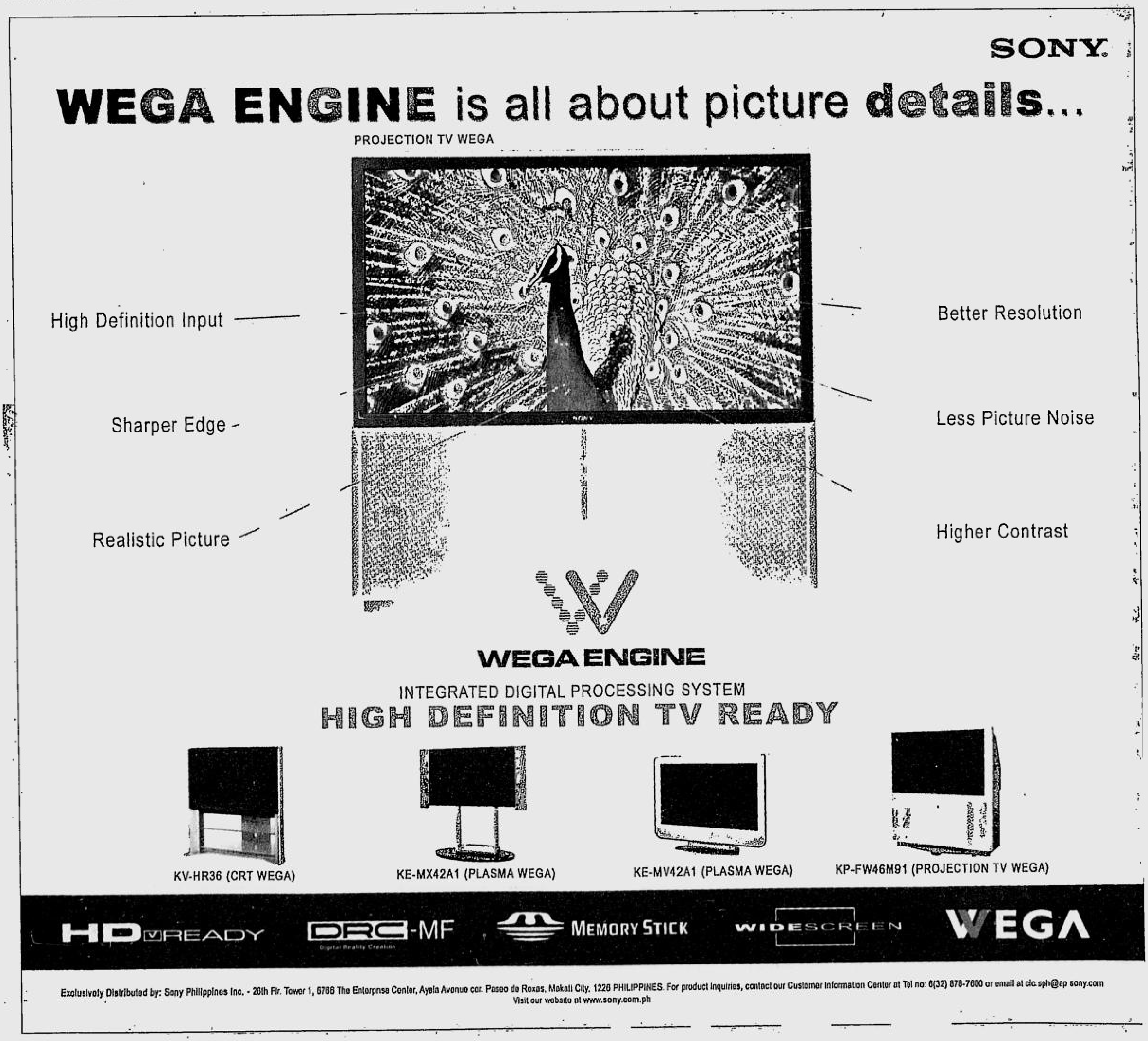
Touted as a truly unique and different from the usual appliance exhibits we have come to know, "Plasma Pleasures" presents the best and the latest in plasma TV which surely would offer customers a truly Plasma Pleasure-able experience.

An exhibit which can be likened to a trip to an art gallery, Automatic Centre has collaborated with its design consultants to create a unique backdrop specifically designed to highlight the flat screens. Its layout also allows people to admire the products while moving easily from one booth to the next.

"Plasma Pleasures" has a very successful debut at Glorietta in Makati last November. The exhibit at ATC's Activity Center runs from Dec. 13 to 30, 2004.

TESSA Prieto-Valdes is joined by Automatic Centre Executives : Mr. Sammie Lim - President, Mrs. Peng Giok Lim, Mr. Benito Lim - Chairman and CEO, Ms. Elena Lim-CFO

Friends of Automatic Centre, Raffy and Gina Hechanova visits the first ever plasma show "Plasma Pleasures!" with them in photo are: Mrs. Irene Lim Chua - SEVP, Mr. Donny Tantoco - Phil, Retailers Association President and Ms. Tessa Prieto-Valdes - TV Host/Socialite, Columnist.



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# Automatic CENTRE

# PLASMA PLEASURES

THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBIT

Pioneer
0%
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Pioneer
0%
Pioneer
Pioneer
Pioneer
0%

**December 13-30, 2004**
**Alabang Town Center**

## Exhibit features

"Plasma Pleasures" features over 50 of the latest models with award-winning innovations in flat panel televisions, including the world's largest plasma TV on display. Fourteen fabulously experiential booths that showcase the world's top brands namely AOC, Audiovox, Fujitsu, Hitachi, JVC, Kolin-Syntax, LG, Philips, Panasonic, Pioneer, Samsung, Sharp, Sony and Toshiba are on display. In addition, a 15th booth highlights the newest models in both large and wide screen TVs with the latest DLP and LCD projection TVs on display.

## Four more days to go [illegible] great Plasma Buys and Amazing Deals

Since the best and the latest plasma TVs are being showcased in the exhibit, customers would be able to compare and choose which is the best plasma TV for them. This would not be possible with ordinary displays at appliance stores that would usually present a couple of Plasma TVs.

Plasma TVs are even offered at 0-percent interest for up to 12 months on major credit cards. Indeed, Automatic Centre makes sure that bringing home that flat screen TV experience is possible this Christmas season!

"We know that affordability is key for our customers that's why we have teamed up with our bank and credit card partners to offer fantastic deals with great value at Plasma Pleasures," says Mia Chua, AVP of Automatic Centre.

Fabulous freebies, such as a 14-inch television, personal refrigerators, microwave ovens, wireless headphones and gift cheques, are up for grabs from BPI Card, Bankard, Citibank, HSBC and Standard Chartered. While premium items that include home theater systems, digital cameras and video cameras are also amazingly on offer.

Beside the zero-percent interest, special deals are also on offer for prospective buyers. You just have to visit the exhibit to get hold of those deals.

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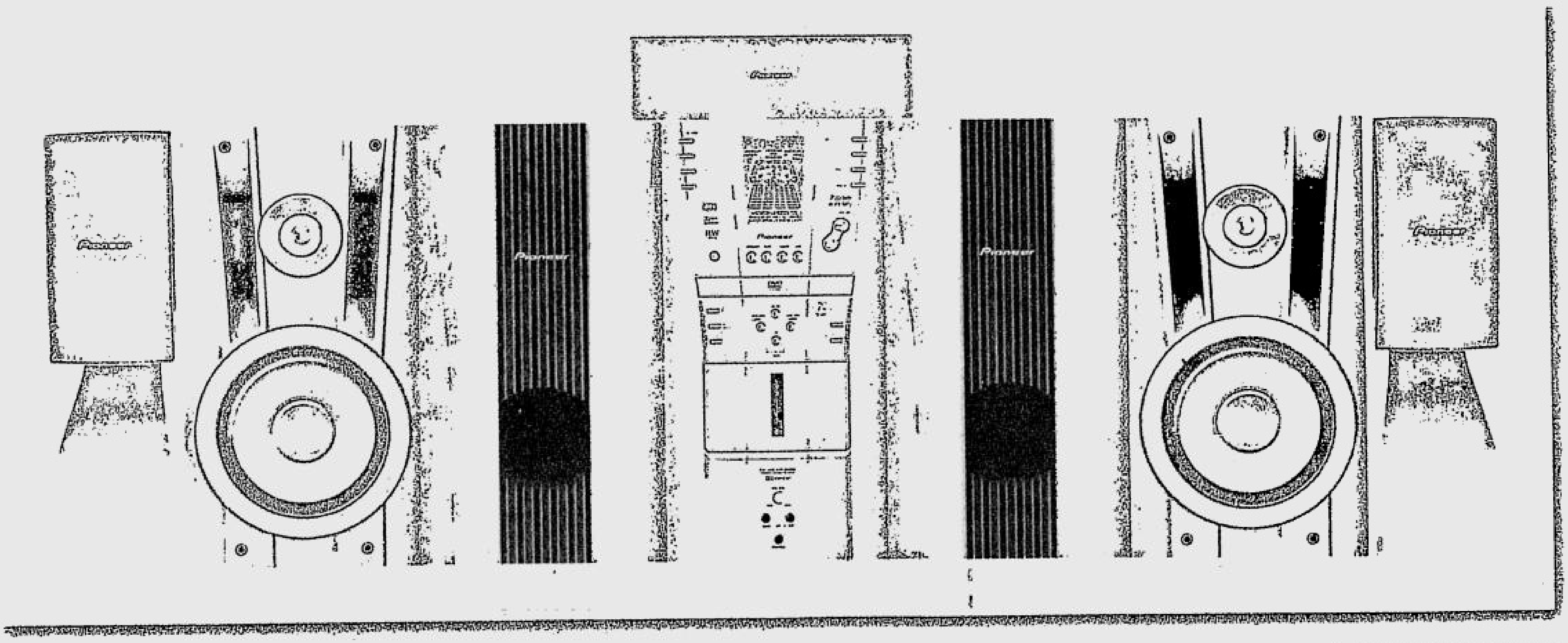
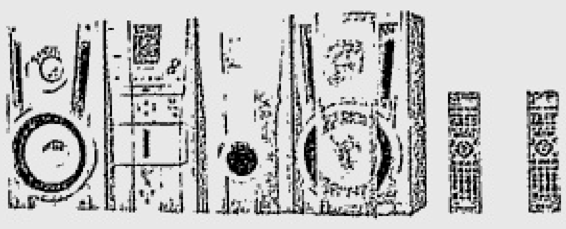
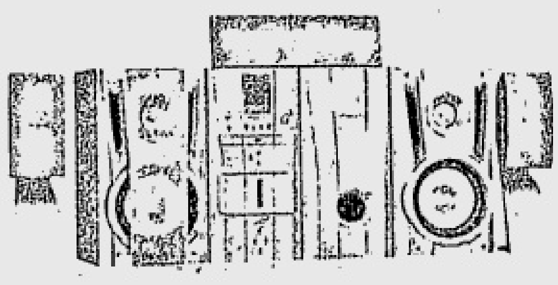


## EV99DVD

Watch out for the **EV99DVD** from **Pioneer**. Wearing a streamlined design with sleek lines, smooth silver finish that has drawn stares from the local population. The **EV99DVD** is reportedly armed with a **5-speaker system** with **dual subwoofers** and has been known to possess full **Karaoke Functions**. Last seen playing **DVD, VCD, CD, WMA, MP3** and **JPEG** for satisfied buyers. If you come across an **EV99DVD Mini System** at your nearest **Pioneer** dealer, grab one immediately!



EV33DVD



EV66DVD

Also available: **EV66DVD** and **EV33DVD Mini Systems.**

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VISIT AUTOMATIC CENTRE'S PLASMA PLEASURES EXHIBIT FROM DEC. 13 TO 30, 2004 AT ALABANG TOWN CENTER.

Automatic CENTRE
PLASMA PLEASURES

# Best time to buy

*Automatic* CENTRE

PLASMA PLEASURES
THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBIT

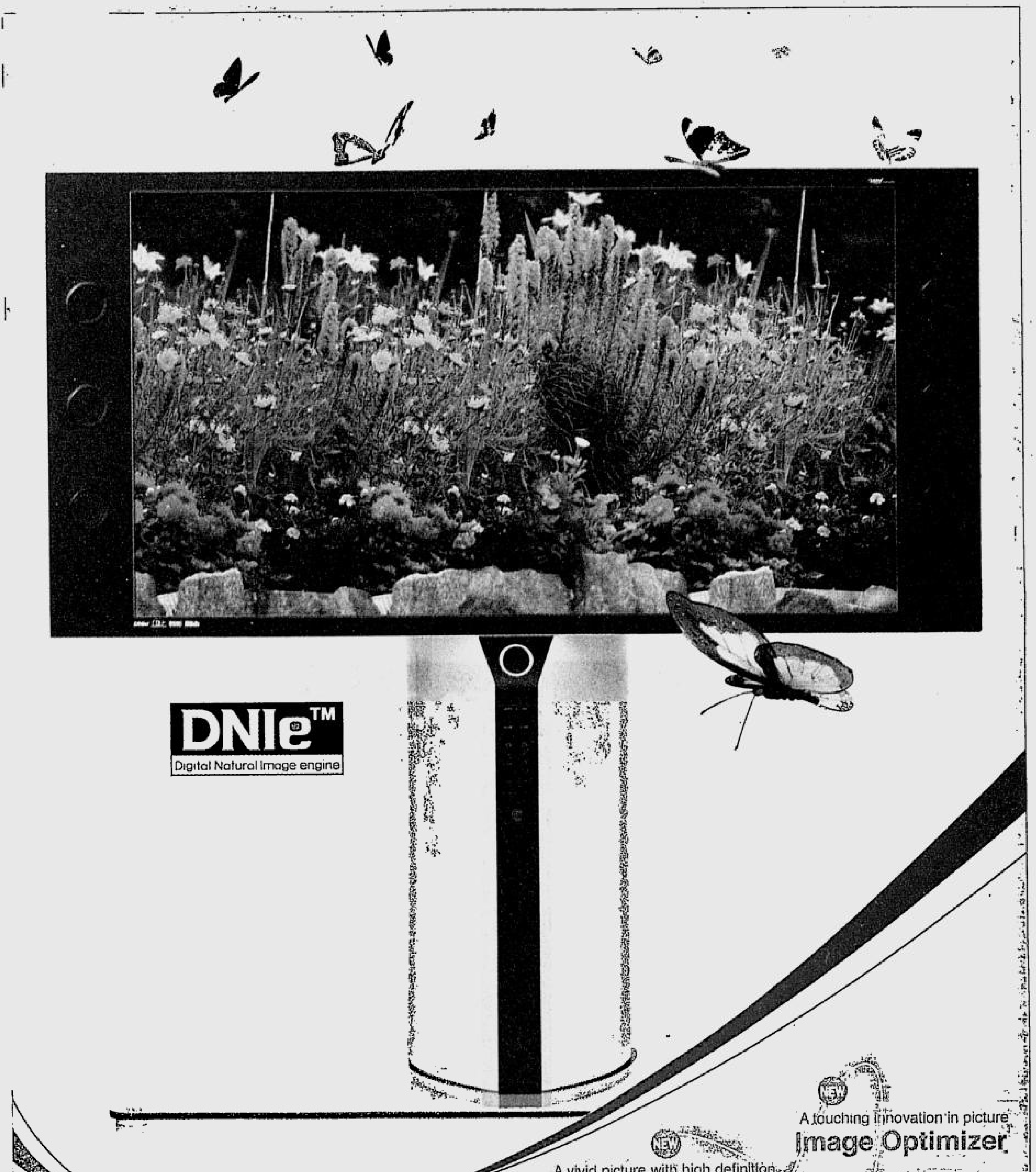
**December 13-30, 2004**
**Alabang Town Center**

'This is the best time to buy plasma TV,' says Samie Lim, president of Automatic Centre. 'Since Plasma TVs were introduced about five years ago, their prices now have gone down to as much as 70 percent,' he explains.

He adds further that buyers today will even get the 'best price for technology' since plasma TVs technology vis-a-vis its price is now at its optimum.

As the pioneer and the oldest retail appliance store in the country, Automatic Centre sees to it that customers would see the latest in technology. The company has done that during its more than 50 years in the market-as betamax improved to VHS and VHS to VCD and DVD. Automatic Centre was also there when TV went from black to color, from mono to stereo to quadriphone, and from picture tube to flat screen and now to plasma.

"The concept of putting up an exhibit is also a way of 'edutainment' wherein visitors to the exhibit will get to know what plasma TV is and how it is different from LCD or projection TV. This is Automatic Centre's way of educating people with technology as the country catches up with the more affluent countries," adds Samie.



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# Automatic CENTRE

# PLASMA PLEASURES

## THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBIT

December 13-30, 2004
Alabang Town Center

AOC
42"
PLASMA
TV

SYNTAX
kolin

Geoffrey shares that the ultimate complement they got from the exhibit came from a satisfied customer. He quotes, ‘This exhibit is great! This is my first opportunity to see and appreciate the different brands and their products on display at one single location . . . usually its just one or two units I see per store I visit . . . the exhibit made it easy for me to compare the models I was choosing from and decide on the unit I wanted for my home.’

Geoffrey adds that the customer was obviously happy with what we offered as he ended up coming back a number of times and buying several units!

Automatic Centre, established in 1948, is recognized as the pioneer in appliance retailing in the Philippines.

The Plasma Pleasures exhibit highlights the company’s continuing efforts to keep Filipinos abreast of the latest market innovations and technologies while making these products available at good and reasonable value to consumers.

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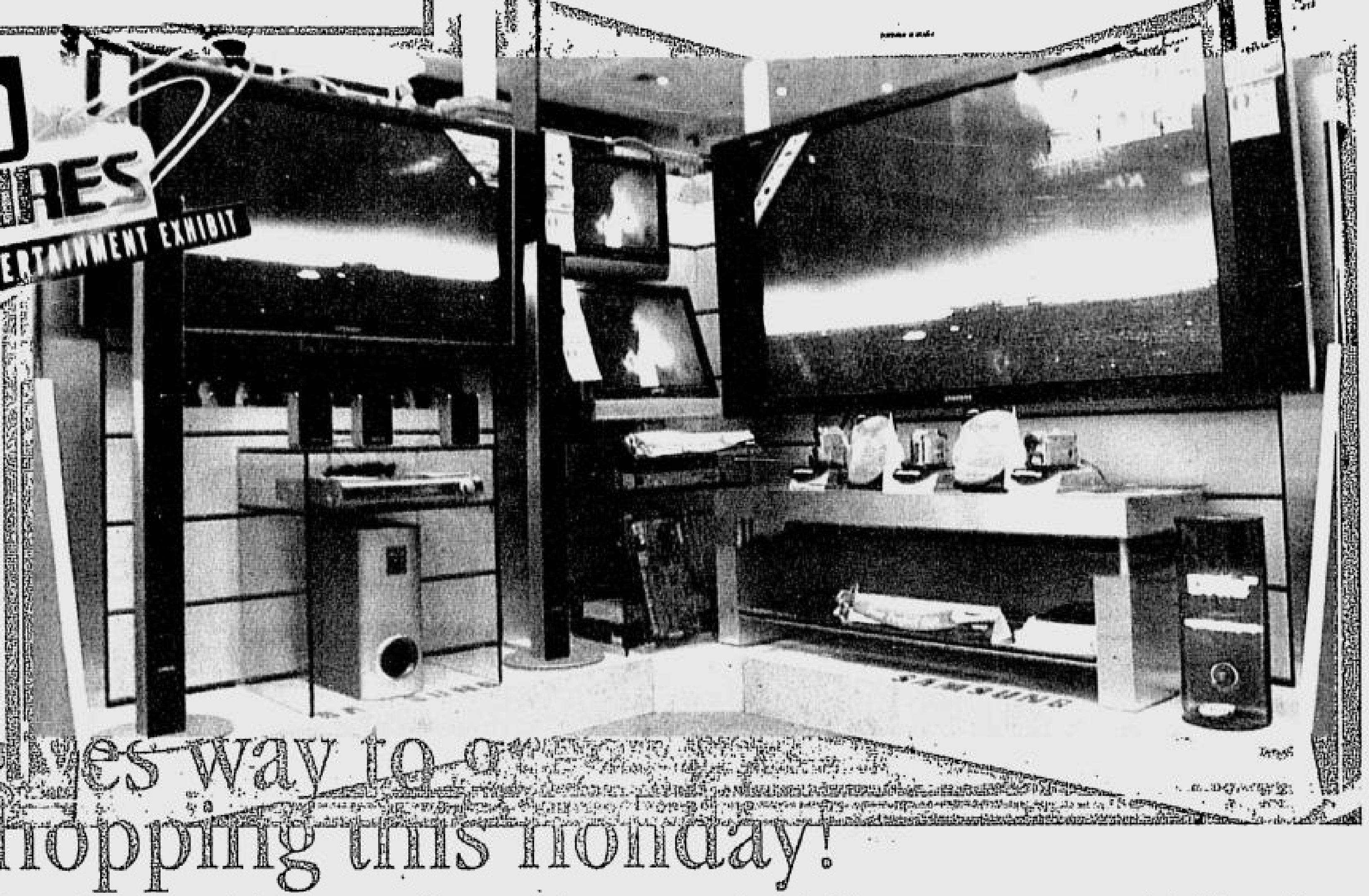
## PLASMA PLEASURES

THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBIT



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# PLASMA PLEASURES

## THE ULTIMATE ENTERTAINMENT EXHIBIT

**December 13-30, 2004**
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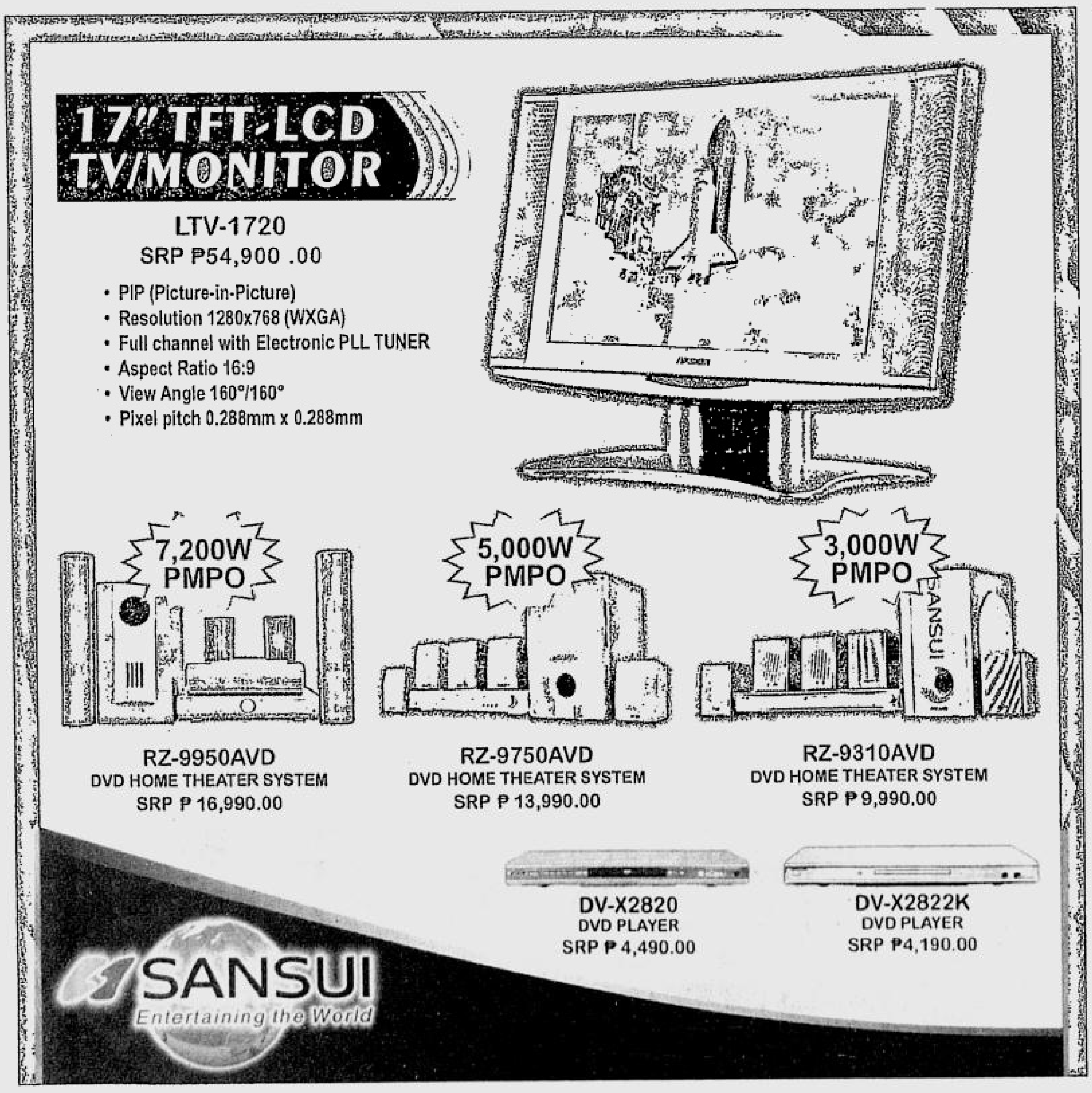
JVC
DynaPiX
JVC
DynaPiX

# Fantastic reviews

Having spent more than a year in the planning and preparation of the first ever Plasma TV and LCD TV exhibit in the country, Automatic Centre opened to fantastic reviews and significant customer interest for the first leg of the exhibit in Glorietta.

"I guess we timed the market correctly," shares Geoffrey Lim, general manager - office of the chairman. "We were initially uncertain of how the public would react to our exhibit, even as we got our suppliers, banks and credit card partners on board. However, regardless of commercial outcome, we had set out to make this event an educational, learning and most especially an experiential event. We felt that it was time for Filipino families to discover the hottest thing in consumer electronics today-flat panel displays (i.e. plasma and LCDs)."

Mia adds, "When you go on business or leisure trips to the US, UK, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong or Singapore, you will notice that plasma and LCD TVs have become ubiquitous at airports, in offices, at retail store fronts and most especially at home. We wanted to make sure that Filipino families are able to enjoy that same experience and decided to conceptualize 'Plasma Pleasures' in order to share the visual pleasures of flat panel televisions in the Philippines."



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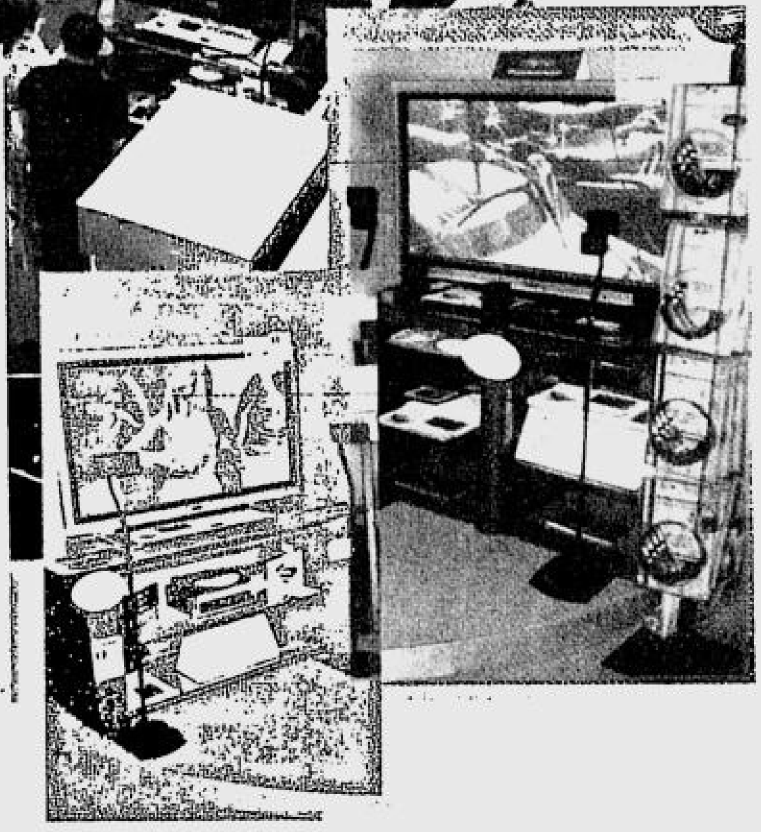

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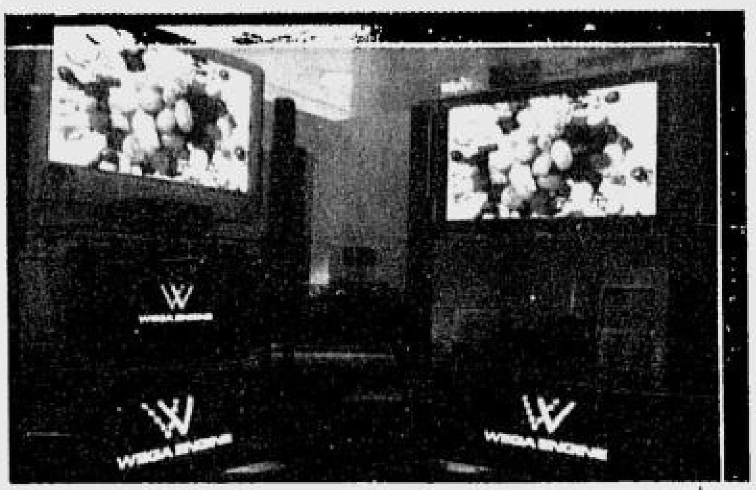
# Sony brings Home Entertainment mainstream



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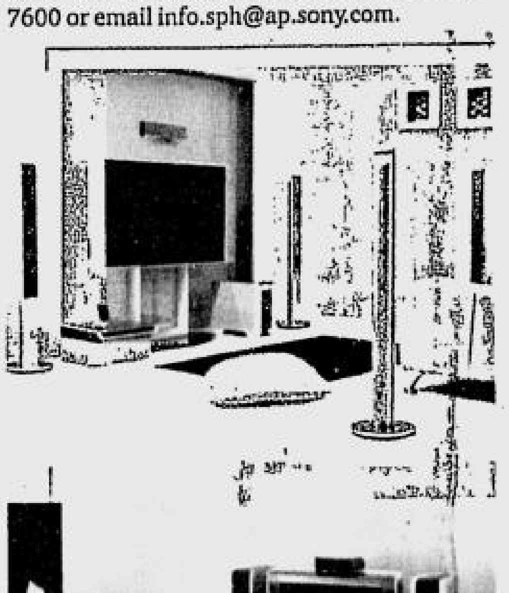

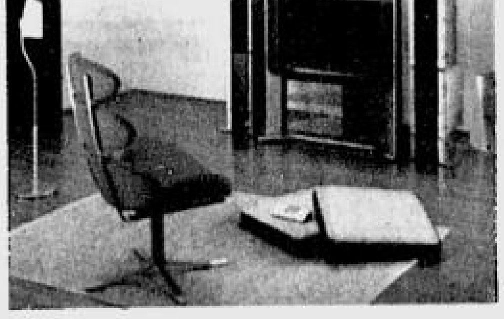

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MOVIES IN HIS MIND. "I still have so many stories inside me," says Lee.

### RICKY LEE

# 'I write because I want to be remembered'

By Paul Daza
*Contributor*

IT'S amazing that award-winning screenwriter Ricky Lee, favorite of the country's top producers and directors for film and television, is still unsure if people like his work.

Several years ago, after writing the scripts of acclaimed and popular movies like "Pusong Mamon," "Rizal," and "Bagong Buwan," Ricky took a breather from the movies. He worked as creative consultant for ABS-CBN, where he supervised the work of other writers in the drama department and helped conceptualize the network's phenomenally successful *teleseryes*.

Somehow, Lee found time to train a whole new generation of screen playwrights through his hugely popular workshops. His instructional book, the best-selling "Trip to Quiapo," is still considered the bible for anyone who aspires to write for TV and film.

When the mild-mannered Lee decided to return to the crazy world of movies earlier this year, there was no shortage of takers for his services, even if far fewer movies are being made nowadays.

In this season's Metro Manila Film Festival-Philippines, Lee has two very different opuses, both directed by Joel Lamangan: the gay-meets-gal comedy "So Happy Together," starring Kris Aquino and Eric Quizon, and the World War II epic drama, "Aishite Imasu (Mahal Kita) 1941," with Judy Ann Santos, Raymart Santiago, Jay Manalo, and newcomer Dennis Trillo.

INQUIRER Entertainment recently caught up with Lee.

**How do you come up with the ideas?**

I just need a few thoughts to start the process. "Sabel," which I also did with Joel Lamangan (in June), must be the fastest script I've written. He told me about this nun who was raped in Muntinlupa. Before we knew it, we had fleshed out the story. We met with Mother Lily (Monteverde), and without benefit of a story line or sequence treatment, I wrote and finished the script in four hours the next morning.

"Aishite Imasu" was also inspired by a town mate of Joel's. I took three days to write that, "So Happy Together," two days. It's easy for me to work with him. Each one knows what the other wants.

**Are there any disadvantages to working so closely with him?**

Yeah. We constantly have to remind ourselves not to be complacent and keep exploring "the same places." We always say we should try new directions. That's how we ventured into comedy. That's why "So Happy Together" has a little animation, and at some point, even a talking carabao. That's why we dared to do (the sex comedy revue) "Penis Talks."

**Where did "Aishite Imasu" come from?**

*Matagal na naming nilalako yung* project *na 'yan* ... five to seven years *na.* Na-reject *na siya ng mga* producers *kaliwa't kanan.* Until Mother Lily said, *sige,* go!

Joel knew of a cross-dresser during the war. It started out as a simple story, which evolved until it was no longer just a gender issue but a tale of love, heroism and patriotism that go beyond race and gender.

**Which of your characters have you identified with the most?**

With Joey (Lorna Tolentino) in "Moral," and Osmond (Eric Quizon) in "So Happy Together." Like Joey, I am a very open person. I tend to experiment with everything. I'm also absent-minded. I would enter the wrong car, or go to the wrong places. The joke is that I don't direct because I have no sense of direction. That's why I started writing, to organize myself.

**How about Osmond?**

Like Osmond, up to now I'm a very frustrated writer with so many stories inside me. I'm constantly trying to finish a first novel. And I also have this fear that I will be forgotten. I wake up nights thinking everybody has gone and I am all alone. I have this thought that at my own wake everybody will just leave me lying there. I write (also because) I want to be remembered.

**What about Osmond's inability to have lasting relationships?**

My relationships last six to seven years, and there's no bitterness afterwards. They are all still my best friends. I don't believe in relationships that last forever.

**Are some characters more difficult to flesh out than others?**

For so many reasons, *madali sa aking isulat ang mga* characters na *tatlong* B—*bulag, bakla, baliw. Kaya* imagine *pag pinasulat ako tungkol sa isang baklang bulag na baliw.*

It was easy to write Kris Aquino's Lianne in "So Happy..." I just thought of Kris. *Nahirapan ako kay* Edilberto (Raymart Santiago) *sa* "Aishite Imasu 1941." Otherwise I just flit back and forth from this character and that. It's one of the perks of being a scriptwriter. You get to be all these many colorful characters all at once.

**What is your writing routine?**

*Nagsisimula ako* at 5 a.m. usually. *Umiinom ako ng* Lipovitan *tapos nakikinig ako ng* music to help me get in the mood. For "Aishite Imasu," I listened to Slapshock. For "So Happy Together," it was Eminem.

By 10 a.m. I'm through writing for the day. For the first draft, I just let it flow, without

'I WRITE/ A2

"SO HAPPY TOGETHER," with Kris Aquino and Eric Quizon

"AISHITE IMASU (I Love You) 1949," with Judy Ann Santos and Raymart Santiago

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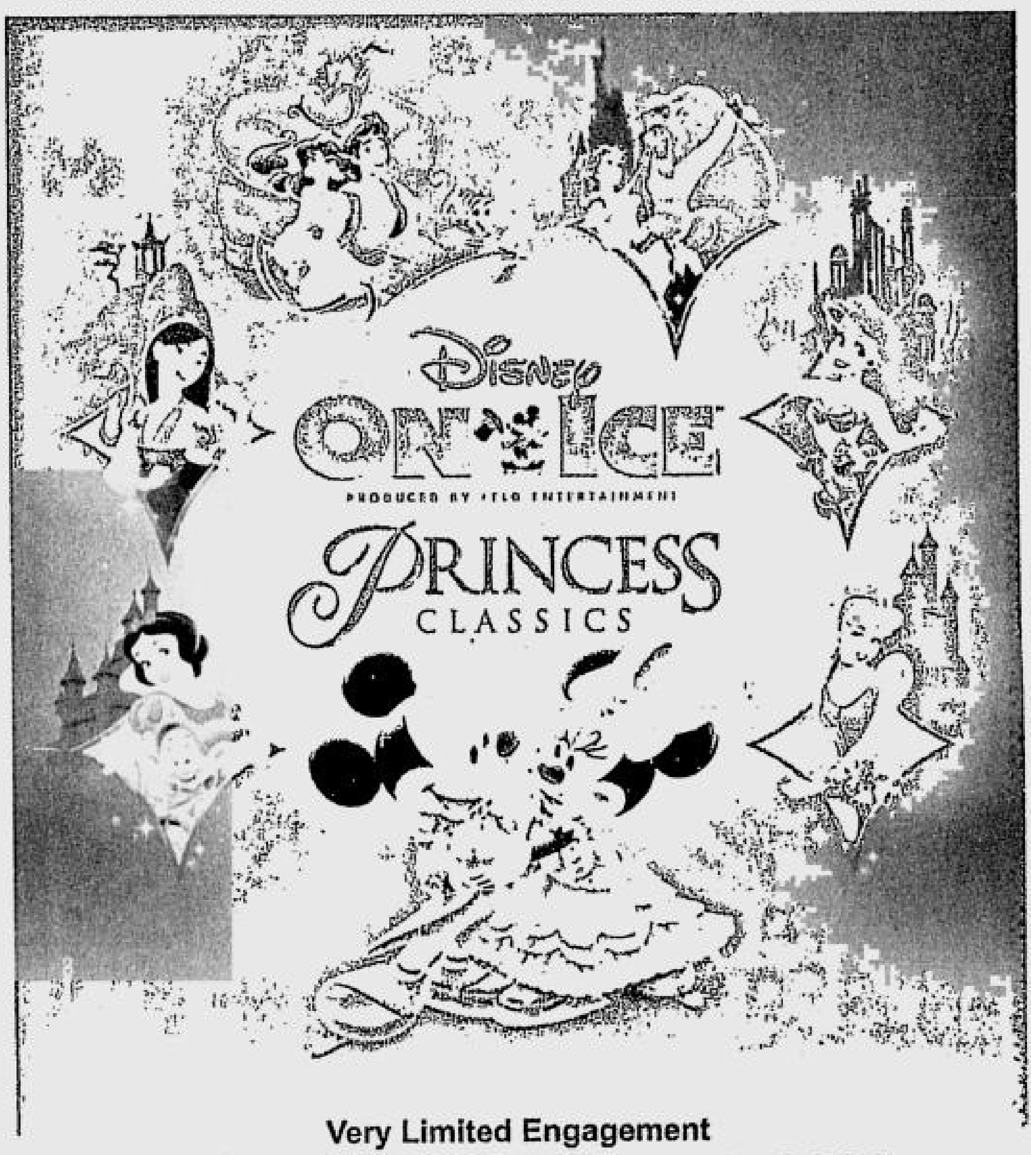

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# Anne Curtis builds a house

WHEN she turned 18 in February last year, Anne Curtis promised herself one thing: Now that she was officially an adult, she would work hard to fulfill her dreams.

Her move to ABS-CBN resulted in a lot of projects, including her role in "Hiram" (where she formed a love triangle with Geoff Eigenmann and Heart Evangelista) and a semi-regular hosting stint on "ASAP Mania." Anne may be seen on yet another ABS-CBN show, where she will be introduced as the newest segment host.

Recently, the new Ginebra San Miguel (GSM) Blue TV commercial starring Anne also started airing on TV. The commercial shows her as a teenager having fun in a bar with GSM Blue.

"I'm very happy [with the move to ABS-CBN], because I finally got the chance to do drama, which I've always wanted," says Anne, who is getting good reviews for her performance as Stephanie in "Hiram."

Anne also recently fulfilled what she describes as her oldest dream—to have a house of her own. The Victorian-style house in Parañaque, has three floors, three bedrooms and a spacious garage. Anne plans to move into the house middle of next year, when she expects construction to be completed.

The house is being financed solely from her show biz earnings. "I'm still paying for it," says the young actress. "Since I started in show biz, that's been my big dream, to have a house of my own."

Because of the house, Anne says she has learned to be more careful about spending. She's cut down on shopping for clothes and shoes. "Most of what I earn these days goes straight to the house."

Anne is also bent on winning an acting award. She says it would be a great way to celebrate her 20th birthday next year.

With the backing of Viva and her manager Veronique del Rosario of the Viva Artists Agency (VAA), Anne believes she will get there soon. "I'm very happy with my career," she says. "Viva kept its promise that, when I turned 18, things would start happening for me."

**SHAPE OF THINGS** to come. Anne is also bent on winning an award when she turns 20 next year.

# 'I write because I want to be...

From page A1

corrections. I laugh over some scenes, cry over others. *Pag nahihirapan ako sa isang eksena,* I skip it and write another first, then go backwards. This gives the script some weird kind of energy which is useful.

**Do you care about box-office results and awards?**

At this point, I just want to enjoy writing. I want my producers to be happy, I want the movies to make money for them, but I'm not bothered if they don't. I don't write for the critics or to win awards.

**Are screenwriters treated better by the industry now?**

No, it's worse now. For their sheer determination to even just hang on, I salute writers, headwriters at brainstormers. I also salute actors who remember to mention the scriptwriters in promoting a movie. In the last Emmy Awards, I was very happy that many winners thanked the writers.

**Do you fear repeating yourself as a writer?**

No. The writers I admire—Graham Greene, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nick Joaquin, for instance—all repeated themselves.

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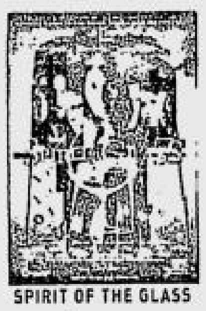

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5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 ENTENG KABISOTE
2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
4 HAPPY TOGETHER
5 (DOLBY) LASTIKMAN
6 SIGAW

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

# Joshua Payne revisits Friday's

SINGER-SONGWRITER Joshua Payne gives the thumbs-up sign at T.G.I. Friday's while dining as a guest in the restaurant. Payne was a "dub-dub" (server) and "birthday singer" at T.G.I. Friday's Arkansas 10 years ago. Payne, abundantly gifted and blessed with a classically trained voice and soul to match, was in Manila recently for a rare live performance and to promote his debut album, "My Love, My Home." Join Friday's 10th year anniversary bash this month when it unveils its rock 'n' roll classic collection of dishes and beverages.

## POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| MANO PO 3<br>GP<br>12:40,3:00.5:20,7:40,10:00 | ENTENG KABISOTE<br>GP<br>12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30 | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS<br>PG13<br>12:45,2:55.5:05,7:15,9:30 |
| LASTIKMAN<br>R13<br>12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10 | AISHITE IMASU 1941<br>PG13<br>1:20,3:35,5:50,8:05,10:20 | SIGAW<br>PG13<br>12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10 |

MATINEE SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 P.M. - P80.00 - MON. - FRI.

## star group of cinemas movie guide

IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

| starmall EDSA-SHAW<br>Tel. No. 726.61.50 | METROPOLIS star ALABANG<br>Tel. No. 850.42.85 | starmall LAS PIÑAS<br>Tel. No. 873.50.04 |
|---|---|---|
| 3 Lastikman | 1 Enteng Kabisote | 1 Sigaw |
| 4 Sigaw | 2 Spirit of the Glass | 2 Aishite Masu |
| 5 Panaghoy sa Suba | 3 Panaghoy sa Suba | |
| | 4 Happy Together | |
| | 5 Lastikman | |
| | 6 Sigaw | |

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For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | PANAGHOY SA SUBA<br>12:25, 3:10, 5:50<br>8:30, 11:10<br>PG 13 |
| 2 | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS<br>12:25, 2:55, 5:20<br>7:45, 10:10<br>PG 13 |
| 3 | ENTENG KABISOTE<br>12:30, 3:10, 5:50<br>8:30, 11:10<br>GP |
| 4 | SIGAW<br>12:45, 3:15, 5:45<br>8:15, 10:45<br>PG 13 |

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

NOW SHOWING

| | |
|---|---|
| CINEMA 1 | MANO PO 3<br>10:30, 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10<br>GP |
| CINEMA 2 | LASTIKMAN<br>11:50, 2:25, 5:00, 7:35, 10:10<br>GP |

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MUSIC MUSEUM
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## SHANG CINEPLEX

1 MANO PO 3
FS 12:20PM, 2:45PM, 5:10PM, 7:35PM
LMF 10PM (GP)

2 ENTENG KABISOTE
(GP)

3 AISHITE IMASU 1941
FS 12:40PM, 3:00PM, 5:20PM, 7:40PM, LMF 10PM (PG-13)

4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
FS 11:40AM, 2PM, 4:20PM, 6:40PM, LMF 9PM

2004 MetroManila Filmfest
in Cinemas 1 to 4
December 26, 2004 to January 7, 2005
In celebration of the Filipino Filmmaker's Creativity

Special Promo Price
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Shangri-La Plaza

## Araneta Center LEISURE GUIDE

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | SIGAW | 12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15 |
| 2 | AISHITE IMASU | 12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15 |
| 3 | PANAGHOY SA SUBA | 11:35 2:00 4:25 6:50 9:15 |
| 4 | LASTIKMAN | 10:50 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 |
| 5 | SO HAPPY TOGETHER | 12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15 |
| 6 | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | 12:35 2:45 4:55 7:05 9:15 |
| 7 | MANO PO 3 | 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:30 |
| 8 | ENTENG KABISOTE | 11:35 2:00 4:25 6:50 9:15 |
| 9 | LASTIKMAN | 11:55 2:15 4:35 6:55 9:15 |
| 10 | Opens Soon! | |

### ALI MALL CINEMAS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Dolby | SIGAW | 11:30 1:40 3:50 6:00 8:10 |
| 4 | SDDS | PANAGHOY SA SUBA | 10:20 12:45 3:10 5:35 8:00 |
| 5 | dts | SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | 11:30 1:40 3:50 6:00 8:10 |
| 6 | Dolby | ENTENG KABISOTE | 10:20 12:45 3:10 5:35 8:00 |
| 7 | Dolby | MANO PO 3 | 11:05 1:20 3:35 5:50 8:05 |

### ARANETA COLISEUM

Disney On Ice
Princess Classics
SHOWTIME

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dec. 27 | Mon | 2pm 6pm |
| Dec. 28 | Tue | 6pm |
| Dec. 29 | Wed | 2pm 6pm |
| Dec. 30 | Thu | 2pm 6pm |
| Jan. 1 | Sat | 1pm 4:30pm 8pm |
| Jan. 2 | Sun | 2pm 6pm |
| Jan. 3 | Mon | 6pm |

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| MANILA | |
|---|---|
| EASTERN | |
| MAXIM | CLOSED |
| MIRAMAR | SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA |
| ODEON | X-MEN 2 |
| ODEON-2 | BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN |
| ROBEN | BOLD STAR |
| TANDEM-1 | SUGAT |
| TANDEM-2 | KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO |
| TIMES | SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE |
| **QUEZON CITY** | |
| ACT-1 | SENSUAL ISLAND |
| ACT-2 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |
| ACT-3 | ORIGINAL SIN |
| ACT-4 | HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY |
| CORONET A | SALAT SA LIGAYA |
| CORONET B | A MAN APART |
| QUEZON-1 | BERTUD NG PUTIK |
| REMAR | X-MEN 2 |
| REMAR-2 | BOLD STAR |
| **NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA** | |
| A | AISHITE MASU (1941) |
| B | CLOSED |
| C | |
| **MANDALUYONG CITY** | |
| SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL | 635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70 |
| CINEMA 1 2 3 & 4 | NATIONAL TREASURE / BRIDGET JONES / SPIDERMAN 2 / SHREK 2 |
| PREMIERE THEATRE | THE INCREDIBLES |
| **CAINTA RIZAL** | |
| STA. LUCIA EAST | (681-5401 TO 19) |
| CINEMA-1 | KALABIT |
| CINEMA-2 | SALAT |
| CINEMA-3 | ONE MISSED CALL |
| CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) | POLAR EXPRESS |
| CINEMA-5 (DTS) | CLOSED FOR RENOVATION |
| CINEMA-6 | CLOSED FOR RENOVATION |
| CINEMA-7 | CLOSED FOR RENOVATION |
| CINEMA-8 | CLOSED FOR RENOVATION |
| CINEMA-9 (DTS) | HAROLD & KUMAR |
| CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL) | ALEXANDER |
| CINEMA-11 (SDDS) | BAD SANTA |
| CINEMA-12 | NATIONAL TREASURE |
| CINEMA-14 | HONEY |
| CINEMA-15 | B'CUZ OF U |
| **LORES** | |
| CINEMA-2 | SENSUAL ISLAND |
| CINEMA-3 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |
| **NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN** | |
| (LAS PIÑAS) | NATIONAL TREASURE |
| CINEMA-1 | PASIYAM |
| CINEMA-2 | BRIDGET JONES |
| CINEMA-4 | POLAR EXPRESS |
| **UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL** | |
| (PARAÑAQUE) | SENSUAL ISLAND |
| CINEMA-1 | KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT |
| CINEMA-2 | MEN IN BLACK II |
| CINEMA-4 | SELDA |

## ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

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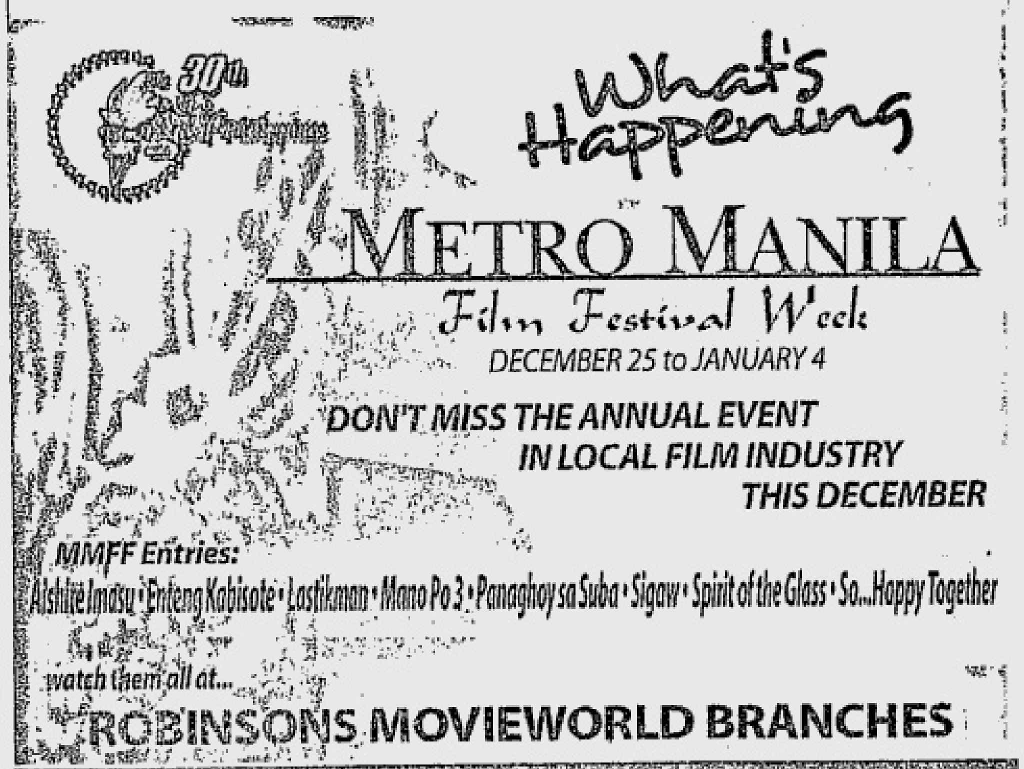
| GALLERIA | 632-9115/16 |
|---|---|
| 1 ENTENG KABISOTE • THX | 6 PANAGHOY SA SUBA |
| 2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | 7 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER |
| 3 LASTIKMAN | 8 MANO PO 3 |
| 4 SIGAW | 9 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER |
| 5 AISHITE IMASU | 10 MANO PO 3 |

| ERMITA | 536-7809 to 12 |
|---|---|
| 1 ENTENG KABISOTE | |
| 2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER | 5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA |
| 3 AISHITE IMASU | 6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS |
| 4 LASTIKMAN | 7 MANO PO 3 |

| METRO EAST | 682-8193/99 • 682-8280 |
|---|---|
| 1 MANO PO 3 | 5 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER |
| 2 ENTENG KABISOTE | 6 LASTIKMAN |
| 3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | 7 AISHITE IMASU |
| 4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA | 8 SIGAW |

| NOVALICHES | 935-3229/31 |
|---|---|
| 1 SIGAW | 5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA |
| 2 AISHITE IMASU | 6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS |
| 3 LASTIKMAN | 7 ENTENG KABISOTE |
| 4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER | 8 MANO PO 3 |



What's Happening

METRO MANILA
Film Festival Week
DECEMBER 25 to JANUARY 4

DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL EVENT IN LOCAL FILM INDUSTRY THIS DECEMBER

MMFF Entries:
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ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD BRANCHES

| PIONEER | 687-5378 |
|---|---|
| 1 MANO PO 3 | 3 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER |
| 2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | 4 SIGAW |

| Citisquare MALABON | 288-0985/2578 |
|---|---|
| 1 ENTENG KABISOTE | 3 PANAGHOY SA SUBA |
| 2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS | 4 LASTIKMAN |

| CAINTA | 240-4681 |
|---|---|
| 1 MANO PO 3 | 3 LASTIKMAN |
| 2 ENTENG KABISOTE | 4 SIGAW |

UpClose and Personal
with the cast of
*Enteng Kabisote and Spirit of the Glass*
at Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA
Cinema Lobby • 4:00 PM

DEC. 28 (Tuesday)

DEC. 27 (Monday)

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

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# Mr. Anonymous

> Through almost the entire movie, Bardem is confined to his bed, with only his eyes, speech and head movements to convey his passion. 'It's not as difficult as it looks. It's a matter of breathing deeply, relaxing your body and letting the weight of your body dissipate'

LOS ANGELES—There is one thing popular Spanish actor Javier Bardem really loves about being in the United States. Few people recognize him.

"Thank God," he said. "I enjoy it, a lot."

But for Bardem, who is a big star in Spain and has won awards for his work, his US anonymity could well end after "The Sea Inside," a Spanish production, hit US cinemas this month.

Bardem, 35, is not entirely unknown here. He earned Golden Globe and Oscar nominations playing Cuban activist and writer Reinaldo Arenas in 2000's "Before Night Falls."

Still, he said he is rarely recognized on the street, in restaurants or public places, which he likes because it helps him in his work. Furthermore, the actor said he is not terribly concerned about making it big in Hollywood because there is plenty of good roles for him at home.

"This movie is made in Spanish, and people are watching it.

It's a good movie," he said. "If there are good roles, it's easy for me to come here. Otherwise, I prefer to stay home."

### Must-see list

In "Sea Inside" ("Mar Adentro"), Bardem plays a quadriplegic who wants to take his own life but is barred from doing so by Spanish law.

The role earned Bardem the best actor award at the Venice Film Festival in September, and the movie was named the foreign language film of the year by a US critics group, The National Board of Review. It is on the list of must-see movies for the Oscars, the US film industry's top awards given out in February.

The movie is based on the true story of Ramon Sampedro, played by Bardem, who was crippled in a diving accident and fought the legal system for 30 years for the right to die.

Through almost the entire movie, Sampedro is confined to his bed. Bardem has only his eyes, speech and head movements to convey how passionate Sampedro is about his cause.

"It's not as difficult as it looks," he said. "It's a matter of breathing deeply, relaxing your body and letting the weight of your body dissipate."

He infused Sampedro's eyes and words with emotion, he said.

### Why deny people's rights?

Because Sampedro is surrounded by people on opposite sides of the right-to-die issue, "Sea Inside" becomes a discussion of the pros and cons of assisted suicide. The movie already has sparked debate about the topic in Spain, and Bardem wants it to do the same wherever it plays.

"I hope ... people can talk openly and publicly about what this means," he said. "Why are we denying [people's] right to do with their life what they want?"

Bardem does not have a background in activism or politics, although much of his work in films seen outside his home country may lead audiences to think otherwise.

He was raised in a family of actors and filmmakers and began acting as a child.

After being cast in 1990's "The Ages of Lulu," he won a small role in Pedro Almodovar's "High Heels."

"Jamon, jamon" ("Ham Ham") in 1992 proved to be his breakout role. He has been nominated for six Goya Awards, Spain's highest film honors, and he has won three.

Other than "Before Night Falls," Bardem's most notable role for US audiences was in 2002's "The Dancer Upstairs."

In that movie, Bardem played an honest detective in a corrupt government. The feature was based on the Shining Path movement in Peru.

### To entertain

Bardem said he doesn't lean toward films that make political statements, but he does like movies that stir people to talk frankly about openly subjects, as in "Sea Inside."

He also said an actor's job is to entertain audiences and is all for good, rousing Hollywood entertainment such as the "Lord of the Rings" movies.

In fact, his other recent role was a small part in major US studio film "Collateral." But many audience members may not have recognized him as the drug dealer playing opposite Tom Cruise unless they saw his name in the final credits.

He said he enjoys his anonymity here and in many parts of Europe, not so much because he avoids autograph seekers and paparazzi, but because audiences don't see him as one character or another. So he can avoid being typecast.

As important, Bardem said his obscurity gives him the chance to walk the streets, talk to others, sit at restaurants and observe people in daily situations. In Spain, everybody looks at him.

"In order to do your job, you have to watch people, and if people are watching you, you have a problem," he said.

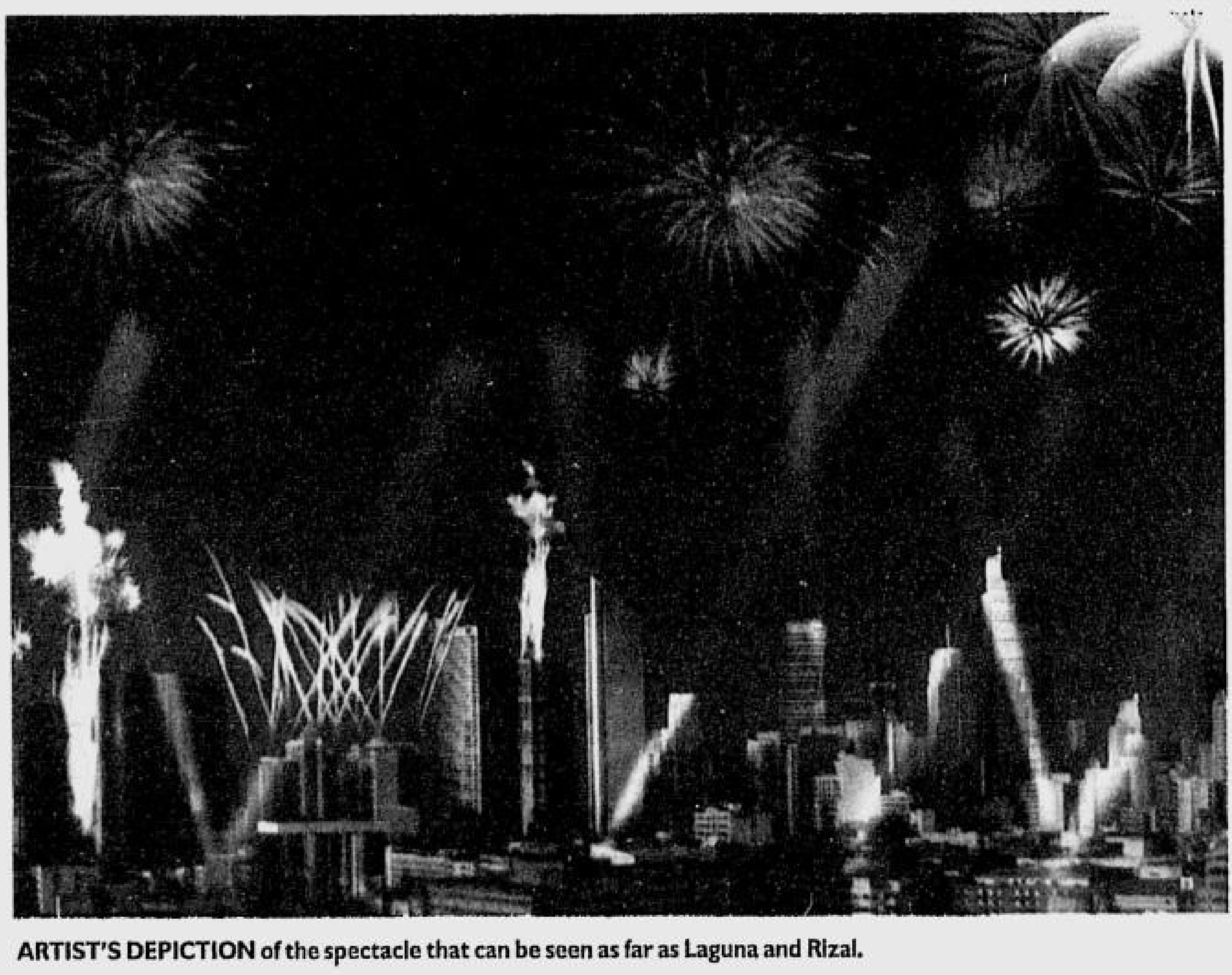
"Sea Inside" opened in US cinemas on Dec. 17.

*Reuters*

**ACTING WITH HIS HEAD,** Bardem may soon become a widely recognized face in the US.

**"BEFORE NIGHT FALLS,"** which earned Bardem Oscar nomination.

# The best, the brightest to light up Makati skyline



**ARTIST'S DEPICTION** of the spectacle that can be seen as far as Laguna and Rizal.

SHOW TIME

AN INTERNATIONAL team of fireworks experts has designed a special 15-minute fireworks show to cap the Makati City New Year's Eve Countdown at the corner of Paseo de Roxas and Ayala Avenue on Friday, Dec. 31.

The fireworks design team is composed of fireworks show designers from Italy, Australia, Japan and the Philippines who have competed individually in fireworks competitions in Europe, Asia and the United States.

"This will be the first time that these internationally acclaimed fireworks technicians will collaborate in the Philippines for a show specially made for the Makati New Year's Eve Countdown," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said in a statement.

Organizers have already brought into the Philippines specially made fireworks from Europe and other countries which will be presented locally for the first time.

"Filipinos will be treated to a spectacular fireworks show by some of the best fireworks experts from the Philippines, Italy, Australia and Japan," Binay said.

The multi-colored fireworks spectacle will feature aerials towering 1,200 feet, illuminating the famous Makati skyline of towering corporate buildings.

Organizers said residents from as far as Malabon in northern Metro Manila, San Pedro in Laguna, and Antipolo City in Rizal will be able to see the fireworks show from their communities, but the best vantage point is at the Paseo and Ayala area, where a laser light show and a musical production number will complement the firework display.

"In itself, the aerial fireworks will be a sight to see, but there will be fireworks at the ground level and a special laser light show and musical numbers so the best place to be is at the event venue," Binay said.

The safety factor in the Makati fireworks show is being tightly watched. The fireworks show was designed after intensive studies of the venue site and other factors such as wind direction.

The fireworks will not be set off manually, but by computer. The fireworks design and the firing synchronization will be controlled by a computer, too. There will be no manual firing, the mayor stressed.

The Makati New Year's Eve Countdown will also feature the country's top rock acts led by Parokya ni Edgar, Bamboo, Kitchie Nadal and Asin performing in a dusk-to-dawn concert.

Jugglers, magicians, acrobats and clowns will mingle with the crowd, and will hand out party items.

Makati's five-star hotels, bars and food establishments will sell food and drinks to revelers.

The Makati New Year's Eve Countdown is a project of Mayor Binay and the City Government of Makati, with the support of Ayala Land, Makati Commercial Estate Association (Macea), Ayala Center, Manila Bulletin and SM.